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Australian musician

ISSUE 47 SPRING 2006

THIS EDITION
FREE

ON SONG!

Josh Pyke and
Youth Group's Toby Martin
on the science of songwriting!
Plus Holly Throsby and SFK's Paul Dempsey

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CONTENTS >>

- 6 THE LOAD OUT News. WIN IVAN RICHARDS PEDAL**
10 • ON SONG! SONGWRITING FEATURE
• JOSH PYKE & YOUTH GROUP'S TOBY MARTIN
14 • SFK'S PAUL DEMPSEY
16 • HOLLY THROSBY
17 • VANESSA RAINE/DOM ITALIANO
19 ANNUAL READERS' POLL. WIN MATON GUITAR!
20 TOMMY EMMANUEL
24 THE SLEEPY JACKSON
28 SEYMOUR DUNCAN
31 NEW YORK DOLLS
33 GEORGE LYNCH
34 MATISYAHU
38 TOTO at soundcheck
40 GETTING THERE! New series for bands
42 THE GIGGING MUSICIAN with Joe Matera
44 XPOSED Independent artist page
45 DISC/DVD
48 ELECTRONIC WARFARE with Baz
51 DRUMS with Grant Collins
52 KEYBOARDS with Allan Zavod
53 BASS with George Urbaszek
54 GUITAR with Simon Patterson
56 CHECK 1,2 Latest gear road tested
71 SUBSCRIBE. WIN ESP GUITAR & RANDALL AMP!

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EDITOR'S SAY!

There has been much discussion recently on the effects of digital downloads on the music business, but it seems the internet is making quite an impression in many other ways. One website whose impact is taking on revolutionary proportions is My Space. Apart from those who are ideologically opposed to the Rupert Murdoch owned site, an increasing amount of artists are creating My Space sites to help spread their music across the globe. As told by some artists in this edition, the free My Space service not only allows you to upload samples files of your music to offer the public, it's also a powerful promotional tool for advertising upcoming gigs. The discovery of acts such as The Arctic Monkeys, Lily Allen and Sandi Thom through My Space has been well documented, and I know for a fact that Australian record company personnel are constantly scanning the site for new talent. Add to this the benefit of being able to interact with like-minded artists worldwide, and you'd be hard pressed to find a reason not to have a My Space site, especially if you can't afford to maintain your own independent site. I've never been one to help promote a giant corporation's product, and I'm sure that competing sites will emerge eventually, but if I was in a working band looking to move forward, I'm pretty sure I'd be using the service.

Anyway ... In this edition we spotlight the art of songwriting and get Josh Pyke together with Youth Groups' Toby Martin to chew the fat on the secrets of penning a good song. Something For Kate's Paul Dempsey and singer/songwriter Holly Throsby tackle the same issue, as does Vanessa Raine and Dom Italiano, a couple of undiscovered artists we found on My Space. Plus we speak with the legendary Seymour Duncan, the curious Luke Steele of The Sleepy Jackson, the wonderful Tommy Emmanuel, George Lynch, Matisyahu, Toto and the fabulous David Johansen from the reformed rock icons, the New York Dolls.. and don't forget to fill out our annual Reader Survey and go into the draw to win a Maton guitar. Read it with feeling!



DRUMMERAMA!



Autograph session. From left. Tommy Igoe, Thomas Lang, Dom Famularo, Rodney Holmes.

As promoted in our last edition, the annual **Australia's Ultimate Drum Weekend** took place in July at Melbourne's Darebin Arts Centre featuring some of the world's finest percussionists. For two days the audience was treated to some stunning performances, stimulating workshops and a huge array of drum product for sale. European star **Thomas Lang** and local hero **Grant Collins** showed what amazing stick work could be achieved with their massive kits.

Cindy Blackman and Rodney Holmes



preferred scaled down five and four piece kits but were no less impressive. Broadway's **Tommy Igoe** presented an unforgettable workshop and regular AUDW visitors **Dom Famularo** and **Dave Weckl** (Pictured right) played up a storm, particularly during the all-in jam on an improvised piece vaguely linking back to Chick Corea's 'Spain'. Congratulations must go to organiser **Frank Corniola** for the largely unrecognised work he does to promote percussion in this country. See you all at AUDW 2007!

AUSTRALIA'S FASTEST DRUMMERS CROWNED



The national final of Australia's Fastest Drummer contest was decided in a gripping night of fun and excitement at Allans Music's Gawler Place, Adelaide store on July 12. Staged nationally by Allans Music and hosted by the original World's Fastest Drummer, Johnny Rabb from Nashville, Tennessee, the state champions from WA, SA, VIC, NSW and QLD competed for the glory of being crowned Australia's inaugural Fastest Drummer and the grand prize of a Roland TD3 Electronic Drum Kit. State winners also received Sabian cymbals and TAMA Iron Cobra pedal. And the winners were....Victorian Anthony Lichoudaris (pictured left) took out the Fastest Hands with a score of 1019 improving on his state championship score of 987, and Daniel Presland (right) took out the Fastest Feet Title with a score 870 compared to his state championship score of 926.

... and the world's loudest is Col Hatchman

A normal spoken conversation is approximately 60dB, the humming of a fridge 40dB and city traffic can get up to 85dB. Col Hatchman, drummer for Australian band Dirty Skanks was measured at a staggering 109.1 dB earning him a listing in the Guinness Book of Records as World's Loudest Drummer. Guinness representatives officially documented Hatchman's record on August 4th at The Northern Star Hotel in Newcastle, New South Wales.



WIN ONE OF TWO IVAN RICHARDS FX PEDALS!

Australian Musician offers you the chance to win one of two amazing Ivan Richards effects pedals as used by After The Fall, Thirsty Merc, Gomez, Diesel, Sarah McLeod and End of Fashion to name a few. Up for grabs are **Rich Drive** overdrive and **Rich Blues** pedals. Optimised for "British" voiced amps, the 2 knob Rich Drive retains the integrity of your guitar signal and dynamics, while also providing strong bottom end. The Rich Blues gives you smooth, creamy and dynamically responsive bluesy riffs and lead breaks. The pedals are valued at \$299 RRP each.

For information on the pedals email info@ivanrichards.com or visit www.myspace.com/ivanrichards. Check out Bob Spencer's road test on page 58 this edition.

TO ENTER THE COMPETITION, tell us the name of the famous British guitarist who played with The Yardbirds and had huge solo success with an album titled 'Blow by Blow'.

Send to: Australian Musician Ivan Richards giveaway PO Box 315 Kangaroo Ground, Victoria 3097





LOOSE GRAVEL

ACTS ANNOUNCED FOR HOMEBAKE

Organisers of Sydney's annual Party in the Park, Homebake have announced some of the acts appearing this year and they include Australian superstars **Silverchair**, **Hilltop Hoods**, **Scribe**, man of the moment **Golye**, **You Am I**, **Youth Group**, **Bjorn Again**, **Butterfly Effect**, **Presets**, **Augie March**, actresses **Toni Collette** and her band and the legendary 80s band **The Models**. As always, the event happens at **Sydney's Domain**, this year on **Saturday December 2nd**. www.homebake.com.au

MEGADETH RETURN IN GIGANTOUR

Dave Mustaine's Gigantour will swing it way to Australia in October. Featuring Mustaine's band **Megadeth**, the tour also includes **Mike Cavalera's Soulfly**, metal titans **Arch Enemy** and Germany's metalcore exponents **Caliban** plus local acts to be added.

GIGANTOUR DATES:

Brisbane Riverstage Oct 21, Sydney Hordern Pavilion Oct 22, Melbourne Festival Hall Oct 24, Brisbane

ASIA REFORM

Prig rock fans will squeal (whether that's with delight or pain...) at the news that 80s supergroup Asia has reformed with original members - Steve Howe, Geoff Downes, Carl Palmer, and John Wetton. Asia had a number one USA hit with the single 'Heat of the Moment', and are getting back together to tour extensively. No news as to whether the band will make it to Australia. For fans of the band, in November Riot is releasing 'Never In A Million Years' a live album by two of Asia's members John Wetton and Geoffrey Downes, who toured as Wetton Downes Icon.

SILVER NIGHT DRIVE SCORED JET SUPPORT

As the world conquering Jet returned to Australia to play tracks from their soon to be released new album, local outfit **Silver Night Drive** were pleased to have been invited to play the support slots. While yet to release a commercial disc, the band is well respected within the Melbourne music scene.

Producer **Tony Visconti** (Bowie/ T Rex) described **Silver Night Drive** as one of the most exciting bands he'd heard all year. The band's debut album is due for release later in 2006.

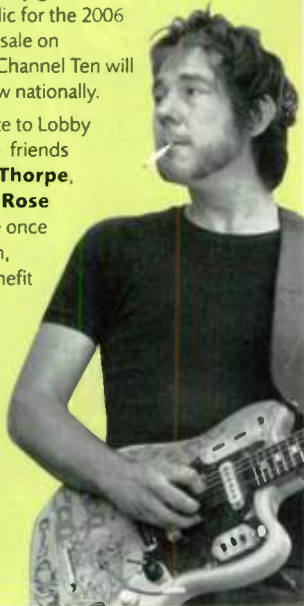
www.myspace.com/silvernightdrive

LOBBY LOYDE'S ARIA RECOGNITION

An ailing Lobby Loyde, Australian rock guitar legend, was inducted into the **ARIA Hall of Fame** on August 16 at Melbourne's Regent Theatre. Other inductees this year included **Divinyls**, **Helen Reddy**, **Icehouse** and **Daddy Cool**.

The Hall of Fame event always precedes the major ARIA Award night, which is to be held on October 29 at Sydney Olympic Park. This will be the 20th anniversary presentation of the ARIAs. The very first ARIAs took place in 1987 in front of 500 industry only guests. Tickets for the general public for the 2006 show will go on sale on September 21. Channel Ten will televise the show nationally.

In another tribute to Lobby Loyde, longtime friends including **Billy Thorpe**, **Spectrum** and **Rose Tattoo**, who he once played bass with, performed a benefit concert late in August at Melbourne's Palace to assist Lobby in his fight against cancer.



MALMSTEEN UNLEASHES THE FURY DOWNUNDER!



In November this year, acclaimed neoclassical metal guitar virtuoso Yngwie Malmsteen, will 'Unleash The Fury' for Australian audiences. Yngwie has dominated the world of solo guitar for over two decades and is now on his way to Australia to perform his dark, moody and blistering set nationwide. Yngwie Malmsteen is regarded by many as one of the most technically accomplished hard rock guitarists to emerge during the '80s, exploding onto the music scene at barely 20 years of age with his jaw-dropping technique of lightning fast riffing. Albums such as 'Rising Force', 'Marching Out' and 'Trilogy' have consolidated his reputation as the King of Shred. In 2004, Yngwie produced a highly acclaimed album titled 'Unleash the Fury' that received rave reviews. Now Australian audiences have the chance to experience one of rock's most gifted and influential guitar players in a fast and furious show.

YNGWIE MALMSTEEN AUSTRALIAN DATES:

BRISBANE - Arena Complex - Tuesday 14 November
SYDNEY - The Enmore Theatre - Wednesday 15 November
MELBOURNE - Palace Complex - Thursday 16 November
ADELAIDE - Thebarton Theatre - Friday 17 November
PERTH - Metro City - Sunday 19 November

SYNTHETIC BREED HIT WITH FULL FORCE



Melbourne cyber metal band Synthetic Breed has just returned from Germany where they performed at the prestigious *With Full Force* festival alongside established heavies such as Korn, Opeth, Kreator and Soulfly. Synthetic Breed played an early 40 minute set backed by a huge PA to an audience of around 10,000 of the eventual 70,000 strong festival crowd. Prior to their German jaunt, the largest gig the band had played was a packed house at St Kilda's Palace. "It's just totally different to playing a small club gig," guitarist Reza Nasser said of the experience. "You have to play on a much larger scale and with much more focus on the performance."

The band used the European time to talk up their current six track EP 'Fractured' to Euro metal magazines such as Terroriser and Rock Hard, with German Metal Hammer promising the EP to be announced disc of the month. The band can be seen around Melbourne warming up in preparation of the recording of their first full length album. The disc will be mastered by lauded Danish producer Tue Madsen (The Haunted, Hatesphere) and will be released on the Eleven Thirty Eight label overseas, through Shock in Australia. Synthetic Breed hope to back up the release with a Euro tour in June and July of next year.

www.syntheticbreed.com



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The Load Out

EARTHCORE FOR VIC AND QLD

Earthcore Global Carnivals will occur in both Victoria (Nov 24-26 Undera) and Queensland (Dec 1-3 Peak Crossing) in 2006. The 3 day extravaganza of music, performance, dancing, art and food will this year feature **Peter Hook** (New Order) with his DJ set, trance kings **Eskimo**, **John Oo Fleming**, **Nick Sentience**, **Skazi**, grandfather of psychedelia **Raja Ram**, **DJ Lucas**, **Tsuyoshi Suzuki**, and many more. The carnival will feature the all star line-up across six floors including the Temple of the Aztecs Monster main floor, Hydra Trance area, Circus Beserkus band tent and sunny market stage. For more information visit www.earthcore.com.au

KOOL SKOOLS TURNS TEN



Former Kool Skools participants, Roadrunner Records' artists The White Room

Kool Skools the innovative project which offers school students an amazing writing, recording and performing experience, celebrates it's 10th anniversary this year. Run at Studio 52 in Melbourne and Megaphon Studios in Sydney, Kool Skools encourages and develops a diverse range of talent in all genres of contemporary music writing and performance. Schools involved in this year's program have already completed their writing and recording and are gearing up for the annual awards nights, to be held at Hamer Hall in Melbourne on October 6, and at the Metro in Sydney on October 11. School age bands, songwriters and multimedia creators are now invited to apply for Kool Skools 2007. Some of the people who have come through Kool Skools include Missy Higgins, Anthony Callea, Axle from Video Hits fame, and Simon Bruce. "Kool skools is a great way to get kids motivated about playing, performing and writing music. I think it also really helps to give an insight of what it's like in the music industry, which is an invaluable lesson to learn so young," said Missy Higgins of the program. Another band involved in Kool Skools was Plunja, who under their new name, The White Room (pictured above), released a new album, 'White Room Music' through Roadrunner Records in August.

AUDIO TECHNICA SUPPORTS KOOL SKOOLS

Audio-Technica has recently jumped onboard with Kool Skools, offering assistance with their quality range of microphones.

"We're delighted to be supporting the development of Australian musical talent through Kool Skools," commented Giles Brading Audio-Technica product specialist. "Worldwide Audio-Technica has a strong music education charter and Kool Skools fits that perfectly. It's a fantastic concept and the way it brings kids into the music production and recording industry is quite unique."

Kool Skools is heavily subsidised by the Federal & State Governments along with corporate companies such as Yamaha Music Australia. Checkout more about the project at www.koolskools.com.au

MUSIC NEWS AND STUFF

AUSTRALASIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY DIRECTORY-THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY APPROACHES



Directory publisher Phil Tripp

The AustralAsian Music Industry Directory (AMID) is a long time success story of the Aussie music industry and a good business model.

It began 19 years ago, and outlasted all would-be competitors. The current edition, its 37th, has 70 categories. Each business is detailed with staff lists, contact numbers and emails. The hard copy has 200 pages. The online version is updated every fortnight.

The directory is also a guide for execs looking at Australia and New Zealand. The US, UK, Canada, Japan, Indonesia, and Brazil are big markets for it.

"We can always tell when Australia becomes the flavour of the month," says Phil Tripp, its publisher. "Someone like Jet or Wolfmother have a hit abroad, and there's a rush by overseas A&R departments to get the directory! Or we know when a manager is planning to tour his act here, because she or he is checking out venues, agents or promoters."

Like all good success stories, it started with an idea. AMID was not the first attempt at putting together a "music biz yellow pages" in Australia even though there was a demand for something like it. In Tripp's case, he was in hospital after suffering a near-fatal heart attack. Bored, he decided to work on a project which he could use his portable computer for.

He identified that it was a good export initiative (in the early days, the listings also listed Asian and South Pacific companies) and got a grant from Austrade. Rather than rely on grant, Tripp ensured the directory was self sufficient from the start. The first edition grossed \$90,000 from ads. These days, it turns over \$1 million a year.

Tripp and his five-person team have quickly adapted to changing trends and they run a tight ship. Deadlines are fiercely kept, so that it comes out on time. Every issue, Tripp says, some blowhard exec will be on the phone haranguing for the deadline to be extended because one of their lackeys was too inept to get the listing forms in on time. "Do you know who I am!" they invariably yell. To which Tripp replies, "No, but I know who you USED to be."

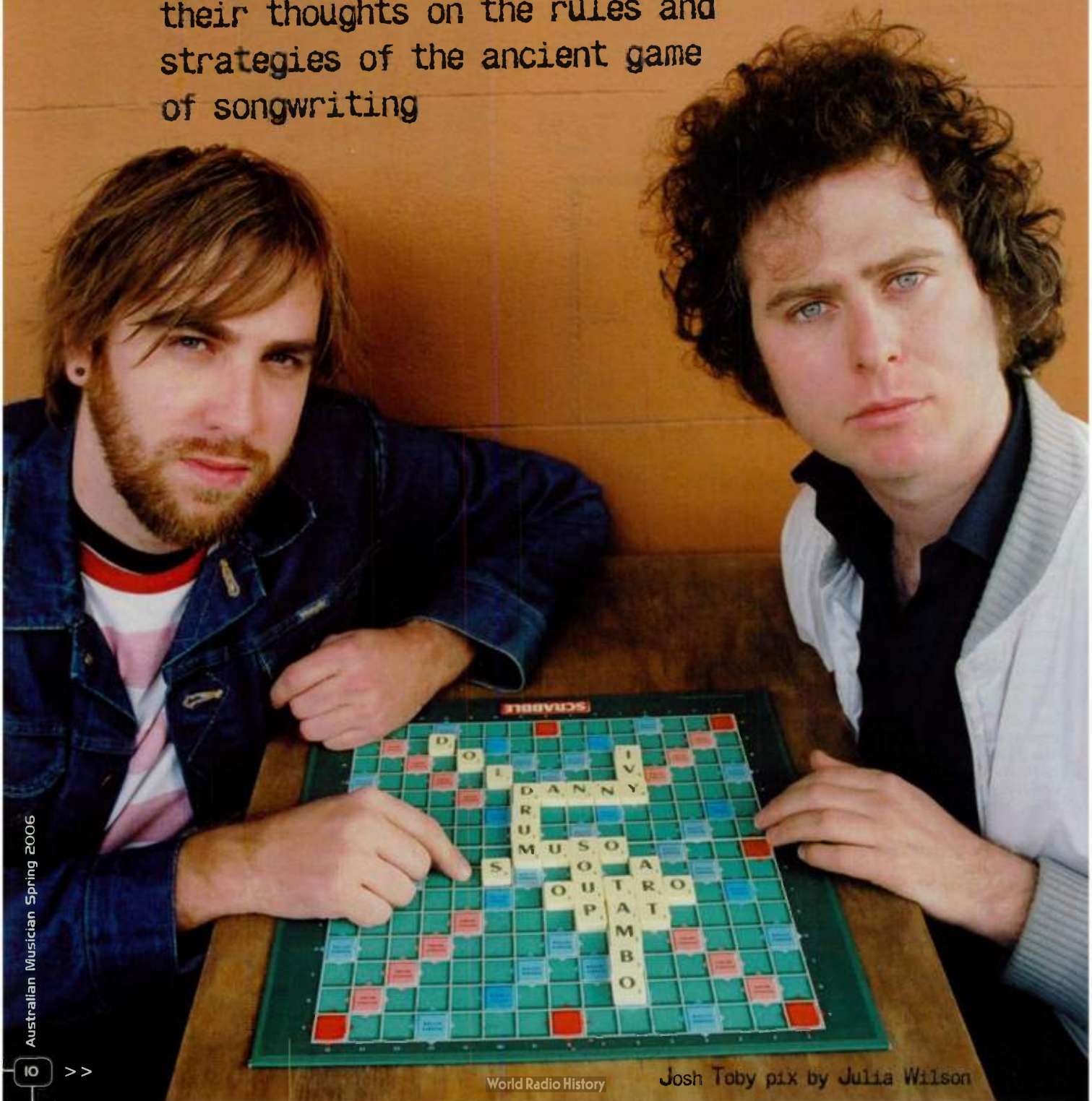
Another reason for AMID's success is that Tripp's team defend the brand. They won't list people who're known to be scam merchants. They put in bogus listings to catch other publishers who use their details without permission. When they do, they initiate legal action. Ken Stewart, leader of anarcho-punk Sydney band Urban Guerillas, praises AMID for giving independent companies around the country a network. Chris Bailey, manager and bassist with Gang Gajang, says many new acts find him through the directory. Brisbane based manager Leanne de Souza says listing her acts like Kate Miller-Heidke and Misinterprotato gives them a national presence.

* AMID costs \$50 per hard copy, see www.immedia.com.au/amid

Story by Christie Eliezer

ON SONG!

Josh Pyke and Youth Group's Toby Martin join Holly Throsby, Paul Dempsey and some undiscovered independents in offering their thoughts on the rules and strategies of the ancient game of songwriting



JOSH PYKE &

Youth Group's

TOBY MARTIN

Story by Stu McCarney

What happens when two of Australia's most talented young songwriters sit down and talk shop? Stu McCarney chairs a chat between Youth Group's Toby Martin and singer-songwriter Josh Pyke that explores the heart of their passion and their craft...

Let's start with your earliest memories of songs and music...

Toby: One of the big records played around my house was Will The Circle Be Unbroken. All these 1950s and 1940s country musos came together in the 70s and recorded this six record live set. I particularly remember a song called "Wreck On The Highway" which is about a drink driving accident. I used to love listening to it - it used to freak me out as well (laughs). One of the lyrics was "whisky and blood mixed with glass where they lay". It's really like gothic country. When I listen to it now it sounds like a hokey country song, but when I was 10 it was a bit scary.

Josh: So a country-folk song, that was your first influence...?

Toby: By the time I started writing songs I was more listening to The Cure or REM or Ride or the more popular music at the time. But I think that early country music maybe influenced my interest in melancholia, but more subconsciously, I'd say.

Josh: The stuff you listen to as a kid comes back to you. It's probably in your blood or whatever. Mine was early Doobie Brothers, The Beach Boys, The Beatles. Their harmonies drive me crazy and I'm obsessed with harmony still. Similarly, I just used to trawl my parents record collection. Like the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band (NGDB)...

Toby: That's on Will The Circle Be Unbroken...

Josh: Bullshit! Really?

Toby: Yeah, on that record they were like the backing band for all the singers and lead musos.

Josh: They did the song I did on Triple J's Like A Version thing. The song that absolutely got me into music and made me realise I had an affinity for music was a cover of a Kenny Loggins song that the NGDB did of "House At Pooh Corner". It's almost like a nursery rhyme but there's something incredibly sad about it and it's the first song that I ever just... I remember sitting on the stairs of my house just crying. I remember asking my mum about why I would be crying about a song and that's when I realised I just gotta get more of this emotional response from music. It's just a really sad song, about your innocence fading and I find they're themes I sing a lot about now. So, the NGDB was probably the first one that killed me.



Who are the songwriters you cite as influences now?

Josh: For me, it's all lyric based stuff. I really, really love Augie March - they taught me about jamming as many words as possible into a song. Listening to Thom Yorke taught me to space one phrase out over almost a whole verse. And Elliott Smith taught me about throwing horrible bitterness in there as well, and juxtaposing that against beautiful, really child-like sentiment. So they're probably the big ones recently. And also Interpol.

Toby: I love that new Augie March record, just thinking about it. The first record's fantastic too...

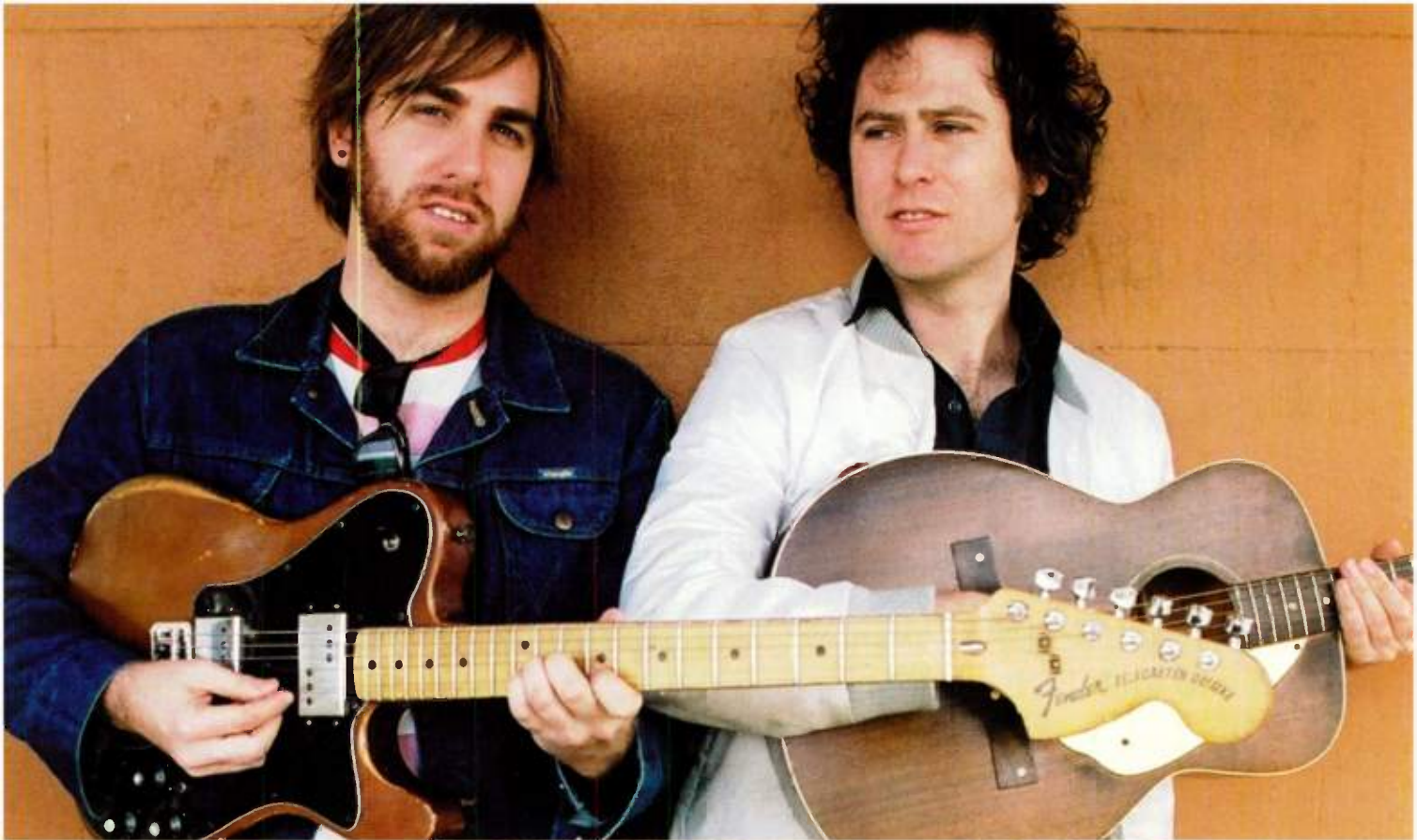
Josh: "Owen's Lament" off that first record... I love that line where he says "May your children remind you of me / whether by another or the ghost of me and you". It's brilliant. Every song. He's one of those guys, I read his lyrics and I'm like I'm never gonna be this good.

Toby: I think my favourite lyricist is David Berman from the Silver Jews. I've never heard anyone write lyrics like him. They were sort of a country-esque band and Steve Malkmus from Pavement was in them for a while as guitarist. But David Berman is a poet and then he started sort of putting his lyrics to music. I don't know how to describe it (laughs). It's pretty cosmic but it's also very real at the same time. Yeah, very big fan. I also think that Paul Simon is a very good lyricist, and kind of under-rated in some ways cause he's a contemporary of Bob Dylan. He manages to write some very simple and powerful things.

How do these guys inform your work?

Toby: For instance, a song like "Start Today Tomorrow" on our new record is a very Paul Simon kind of song. It's a very interior narrative. Just about someone thinking about stuff but it's just trying to be interesting about that.

Josh: That's the thing with all the artists I mentioned. They make you try harder and look at things in a way you mightn't normally have. Whatever it is that evokes the response in you to their songs, you want to make other people respond like that to your music. And you can't over-think that because you're gonna write something really contrived



and it's not gonna work. You need to balance that thing of following your instincts and saying something that has instinctively made you react to something and not worry about whether it makes sense or not. It influences me in the sense I try harder but I also try less in a way - like I don't try and make it something somebody could understand.

Toby: That's a good way of putting it in. When I first started writing songs I was really into Billy Bragg, who's a very literal songwriter. But more recently I've been interested in doing something that's instinctual and on paper might not be the cleverest lyric but there's something in the words and the way they fit the music that makes you feel something. But I think both ways of writing is valid...

Josh: You'll probably bounce between both approaches. That's the thing with songwriting. It's an exploration of what you're capable of and whatever's floating your boat at the time.

Does listening to these songwriters help you find your own unique voice?

Josh: Listening to those artists makes me want to try harder and follow my instincts more. If I want to write really honest, basic boy girl stuff then I'll do it and not feel conscious about it.

Toby: (laughs) Some of those really good people can freak you out for a few weeks. You can get very obsessed with the way they write and sometimes it's a challenge to look for the spirit of their music rather than literally what it is. The songs that just appear to arrive in your brain tend to be the best ones.

Josh: You almost question it sometimes. You're like, 'I didn't try very hard to write this'. I don't know about you, but half the time I sit down... actually I would say every time I sit back and look at a song that I've written I don't recall writing any of it. It's bizarre.

Toby: Yeah. I think to write a song you're happy with your mind has to be relaxed or something to the point where you are just channelling.

Josh: It's almost like... "Middle Of The Hill" I didn't try at all to write that song. I just sat down and the next thing it was written. On the last tour I did I was actually listening to it while I was playing it and I was going, 'Oh actually, that's not bad how that changes from that to that...'

Toby: That's really interesting. Cause to me "Middle Of The Hill" sounds like one of your more thought-out and considered songs. I guess there's just so many lyrics in it...

Josh: I just sat down and it was written.

Toby: The song called "Sicily" on our new record I really wrote in the time the song goes for. It was almost a thing to do. I was thinking about going overseas and I just wrote what was in my head and I never even considered it would be on the record. I played it to Danny, our drummer, and he said 'I thought it was a cover! (laughs)

How do you know when you've written something magic or good?

Josh: Hindsight is really the only time the writer can know. With "Middle Of The Hill" I remember thinking 'I can guarantee no one is going to like this cause it doesn't have a chorus'. But it became the most well received song I've written. It's quite a humbling thing to accept that you can't be objective about your own music. You have to have some discipline in making sure you don't talk yourself up to people when you're talking about it and say, 'Well, I'm the writer, I know what I'm talking about in this song'. Everyone knows that every band that plays around the world every Saturday night thinks they have a shot at being the best band in the world, but it's often not the case.

Toby: I think you sometimes have to try and forget about being the songwriter and try and be the audience. Sometimes it's as simple as: if you enjoy playing and listening to the song there's a good chance other people are as well. Like even though with Middle Of The Hill your conscious brain thought, 'It doesn't have a chorus', you just enjoyed playing it.

Tip for emerging songwriters?

Josh: Don't try too hard and follow your instincts.

Josh: That's a lesson for life, not just songwriting

Josh Pyke's 'Feeding The Wolves' EP and Youth Group's album 'Casino Twilight Dogs' are out now on Ivy League Records.

Websites: www.joshpyke.com www.youthgroup.com.au

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Something for Kate's

PAUL DEMPSEY

Having emerged from the songwriting doldrums with their new Los Angeles-recorded album *Desert Lights*, veteran Melbourne trio *Something For Kate* gear up for a national tour this spring. Singer-guitarist Paul Dempsey speaks with Steve Tauschke.

So did you find the anonymity in LA helpful during your stay?

"Yes, being in an unfamiliar place and not seeing everybody that you know all the time and not getting asked lots of questions about the band, in a sense, just helps you to feel like all that baggage isn't there and it feels liberating. I mean we could have just been anybody in Los Angeles making our first record so it was kind of good in that way. We could just forget about our whole back catalogue and everything we'd done before and any expectations that might have been there.

To what extent did Brad Wood's live-sounding production suit the band?

"Well, that's how we wanted to capture these songs. Our last couple of albums had a lot of things going on in terms of arrangements, lots of strings and piano and synthesizers and mountains of backing vocals. This time we just challenged ourselves to get the message across in the simplest possible way and in the most direct way so that the emotion and the lyrics can really take the forefront and not be competing with all this other stuff. And Brad is really great at that, he doesn't go overboard with effects and embellishments. He's really good at just capturing great sounds. If you want one guitar to do the job of five guitars you obviously really need a fantastic guitar tone to carry it across and he's got a really good aesthetic for stuff like that."

Tell us about the pressure on you personally during the writing process for this album?

"It's a trap but I just second-guessed myself basically. We often characterise it as writer's block but in actual fact I was writing tons and tons of stuff but I just didn't second guess myself for long enough to just settle on a lyric and recognise the worth in something. I just kept on saying 'no, no, it's not there yet' and I just did that up until I lost any perspective. I just kept trapping myself which is my own ridiculous circle that I got myself into. But once I got myself out of it the songs started flowing and I started not questioning it so much."

Was it a case of perfectionism creeping in?

"I guess so but the thing about that is in order to be a perfectionist you have to have a clear vision of what you think perfection is and I don't think I had that. When I think of a perfectionist I think of a guy like Stanley Kubrick who obviously had this completely formed vision in his head and the perfectionism was a method of working towards that and until it was there he wasn't satisfied. In my case, it was more just a void and all I knew was that I wasn't that thrilled with what I was coming up with up to a certain point. So the ten tracks on this album are all those particular moments where there was no doubt or questions. They just felt right, how they should feel.

"I guess sometimes the biggest thing is perseverance. I didn't walk away, I just stayed at it and as frustrating as it was I was determined to spend at least three hours to try to write each day. A lot of days I came



up with nothing but inevitably some days I did. I did think about quitting many times because many times I thought 'maybe I can't do this, maybe it's too hard'. But I kept coming back to it because I love it so much and the idea of not doing it was worse than the difficulty I was having doing it."

So tell us about some of your favourite gear you used on the album?

"I like Fender guitars and amps, generally. I've got a nice 1966 Telecaster that I particularly love that I've had for a while. It's a few decades old and the previous owners have just nicely worn it down and made the neck very soft and smooth and it's just beautiful to play. I've got an old Tele Deluxe and a 60s Jazzmaster as well and they all sound really different and really unique and I just love the way they feel to play.

"So I've got those three Fenders and Gibson 335 and they're what I use in the studio and on tour and they're the only four guitars I used for this new album and our last couple of albums as well. I'll also take this opportunity to give a yell to a guy in New South Wales who has been

making pedals for a couple of years now and I've just started using them and they're fantastic. His company is called MI Audio and I've paid big money for some crazy boutique pedals over the years from different parts of the world and there's some great stuff out there but I was struck by the pedals Michael sent me. They sound really fantastic and they're really versatile and he's really put a lot of effort into making them."

As a theme in this issue we're focusing on artists' favourite songs and song lines ... can you share any meaningful examples with us?

"Bands like Augie March just continually come up with amazing stuff. Then you go back to a band like Midnight Oil, there's no shortage of great Australian bands. But one of my favourite bands of all time is probably Fugazi and they have a lyric that's almost a motto for me now. They have a song called Target which I imagine is about people who want to make music and how there seems to be this path or this road to that through getting a record deal and signing a contract and all that sort of stuff.

"So the song is sort of a battle-cry for doing whatever you want to do and not waiting for someone to endorse it or condone it. There's a line in the song 'if you want to seize the sound, you don't need a reservation' and that line just continually inspires me, even when I'm having trouble writing. If you love music, it doesn't have to be ok with anybody else - you just do it. It's bands like that and lyrics like that that can affect you so much. That song must be ten years old now but it's almost like a motto for me to keep doing what I want to do and not worry about anybody else's take on it."

Desert Lights is out on SonyBMG.

"Out on the patio we'd sit, And the humidity we'd breathe, We'd watch the lightning crack over canefields, And laugh and think, this is Australia" - Mark Callaghan



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World Radio History

HOLLY THROSBY

When Holly Throsby sings a lyric, she doesn't want any unnecessary instrumentation getting in the way. After all, she's laboured long enough over finding the perfect line to describe her inner most thoughts, what would be the point of losing it all in a haze of feedback. Her song arrangements are sparse, the delivery of the lines precise, and critical words sometimes receive an inordinate amount of hang-time. Rather than be concerned with fads, trends and what everyone else is doing, Holly is all about the song. When she released her second album 'Under The Town' in July, music scribes hurled superlatives at it. 'Riddled with poignant lyrical twists', 'A thing of quiet, luminescent beauty', 'A delicious frisson of intimacy', were a few phrases conjured from the Thesaurus. Holly seemed like a perfect candidate for inclusion in our feature on songwriting. Greg Phillips spoke to her just prior to the release of the album.

Is there a certain place, or time of day, or pattern as to when inspiration strikes?

No. I don't really write unless I have a guitar with me because I find the lyrics will come out of the song rather than the other way around. Just the sound of the words even.

Would you consider yourself prolific?

Sometimes I have good cooking and baking ideas, They'll come to me anywhere. I think I'm quite steady. Once I start them on the guitar, then I can walk around with them.

You do a bit of writing other than lyrics, would you call that poetry?

Poetry is kind of a dirty word really, I wouldn't want to say that but then again some of my favourite writers are poets. I think it gets a bad name much like the term singer/songwriter. I think that's a bad name.

So you don't like to be pigeon holed, is that what you're saying?

Well there's a lot of shit out there and seems to be in that genre too. I mean it's in all genres and poetry too.

I mean bad poetry can make you really sick to the stomach.

Are you the type of composer who has bits and pieces of songs lying around or do you like to complete what you started fairly quickly?

I've got little bits and pieces. I'm in the middle of writing one at the moment that has these two pieces that don't quite make sense and and I'm not sure whether to split them into two separate songs or not.

Do you think you have changed the way you write songs over the last couple of years?

I don't stop them now when they start coming. I realised that when I tried to sit down and write songs it doesn't work out. I realised if you can try to be un-self conscious, which is a hard thing to be, then it does work out a lot better. With any kind of writing I think. I know you read those books and they tell you what you should do. I was reading one the other day and it said that you should just write and not really think, which sounds like a terrible hippy rant, but I think there's something in that. Not that I do it myself.

Do you ever say to yourself... 'I'm going to write a song today'?

No. I was trying to finish some songs for this record and there were about three that were really bugging me. One them that was bugging me for two years and I couldn't find any lyrics for it. I had the chorus pretty much straight away. I really liked the song, I thought it was pretty so I wanted to give it good words. I went away down the south coast for a couple of days and really tried to work it. I read in an article that Nick Cave locked himself in a room 9 to 5 every day and that's how he does it. I thought that was a very adult thing to do. I thought I'd try to be an adult and went to do that and I didn't get anything. It was funny because at the end of that day, I sat down in despair and had a beer and it was like snap... and a whole new song came out. And the last



two songs came out like that, trying to work on another song.

They say the best songs come out of despair...

It wasn't so much despair but irritation really.

Who are some of your favourite songwriters?

When when I was younger I liked Leonard Cohen and lots of country as well Gram Parsons, Townes Van Zandt. These days I like country but I like Iris Dement and people like that...Will Oldham. The songwriters I'll play a lot now are many of the artists on my record label. Smog and Joanna Newsom and Cat Power.

The songwriters you mention are all real story tellers, is that important for you?

Yeh, I was on Radio National the other day and a Paul

Simon song popped into my head because I loved Paul Simon when I was younger. He's a real story teller. I think the thing I like about Will Oldham and Smog is that it's not so much about narrative, it's about the image of writing and also it's kind of really filthy which I like as well, and funny in bawdy way, which suits my sense of humour. I think its funny when things sound really beautiful and are really dirty.

You place a lot of emphasis on your words when you sing. Once you have written a song, how much time do you spend playing around with that?

They come out like that. I'm a really big Redhouse Painters fan. I really like Mark Kozelek. I like his lyrics, but the way that he sings ... it takes you a long time to hear them. They kind of blend into one. I can't do that.

You have a My Space site for promoting your music. How do you find the reaction from that?

My Space is weird, a strange little world, but its interesting because I get a lot of people into my music from My Space. There's something more personal about the My Space site, it has more of an immediacy about it and the tone of it is like the people who write are more like your friends. It has that pass the hat around feel.

What happening for the rest of year?

The album will be out... I need to find a new electric guitar ... hoping this will be my best run tour. We don't have a tour manager and I'm the most unorganised person. Last night we did the Northcote Social Club and we got back to the hotel afterwards and we go, 'Guess we forgot the merch!'

Under The Town is out through Spunk Records. www.hollythrosby.com

"I kiss the ground on which you walk, I kiss the lips through which you talk, I kiss the city of New York, where I first met you" Hcodoo Gurus • It's better to burn out, than to fade away'-Neil Young

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE INDEPENDENTS?

Australian Musician found two, so-far undiscovered, singer-songwriters on the website phenomena My Space to ask their views on the art of songwriting

VANESSA RAINE



Thankfully musical substance is back in vogue. Evidence of this can be found in the worldwide resurgence and acceptance of the solo singer/songwriter. Not since the glory days of Dylan and Baez has the 'song', rather than the 'sound' been so important. While that vibrant 60s folk scene in the USA relied on word of mouth publicity emanating from clubs like New York's Bottom Line, in 2006 it's the activity emerging from community-based websites such as My Space that is contributing to the boom.

Melbourne based writer/performer Vanessa Raine is one who enjoys the inspirational exchange between like minded souls via her My Space site. "It's really empowering for all artists whether signed or unsigned," said Vanessa. "Artist to artist, it's a great support and it's a great way of getting to know each other. Finally the decision as to what you're into is with the people, as opposed to being force fed. People are discovering stuff themselves."

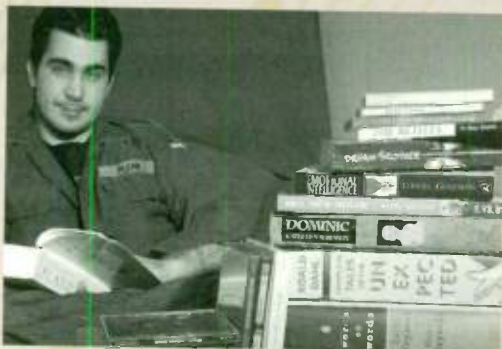
Vanessa cites Rickie Lee Jones and Joni Mitchell as musical influences, and the spirit of those two artists can certainly be found in the songs on Raine's recently released EP 'Moongazing.' It's on this EP and also the full length album 'Playing for Reggie' (to be released in early 2007) that Vanessa features many character based tunes. "I find it really interesting to look beyond myself and try to find something I can relate to in other people's stories," explained Vanessa.

While Raine has yet to be discovered on a mainstream level, she's no slouch in the songwriting field, having already procured a publishing deal and collaborated with Jenny Morris and Sam Hawksley. Consequently her approach to the art of songwriting is well balanced between the creative and the practical elements required to make a name for yourself. "If the juices aren't flowing, I know what the triggers are, which I think is a really good thing for a songwriter to know. Often songs come from a feeling of inspiration definitely, but I think it's unrealistic to say you are passionately living in inspiration 24/7."

On the verge of the release of 'Moongazing', I asked Vanessa what she hopes might transpire from here. "A musical life. Spreading my music so people can hear it, which I suspect everyone wants to do when they record an album. Gain a following and have a wonderful musical life, which I love so much."

www.myspace.com/vanessaraine

DOM ITALIANO



"With insect like persistence, she personifies the meaning of indifference" is a line from Dom Italiano's tune 'Indifference'. In essence that line itself personifies the local singer songwriter's quirky and amiable style. For Dom, who has released three independent albums, gigs regularly and also plays and records with his band Insidezero, spending time on lyrics is crucial. "Lyrics are the most important part of the song. A lot of people feel that melody is, and even structure, but I just feel like the person who's singing the song, or a character, needs to be at a different point at the end of the song than they were at the start. Otherwise, it's not really... you need to grow, as a character."

Like any songwriter, Dom's inspiration can strike anywhere and at any time, however, if the ambience of the room is

particularly pleasing, the songs may sometimes flow a little easier. "There's something about the way the guitar sounds in the bathroom," said Italiano laughing. "Or even a toilet. Or if you can get ... like in a huge concrete carpark, and your guitar sounds amazing. I think it's a lot like a gig where, if you've got a great PA, you play and sing a lot better. So if your guitar sounds great, you just come up with better things."

When Dom finds himself in compositional mode, he's as prone as anyone else to the pitfalls of penning a song. Most musicians have their comfort chords that they gravitate to, occasionally resulting in the re-writing of tune you've written once before, or worse still someone else's. "I love other people's music so much, obviously that does really influence the direction you're going when you actually do a song... or depending on what you listened to that day. But it does take a bit of discipline to make sure that you're not ripping something off," said Dom of the age-old dilemma.

Dom Italiano is also another independent artist complimentary of the communal nature of his My Space site. "It's amazing how the community of it works. I mean I did a gig on Saturday night, an original gig, and it was seven or eight acts and all of them were Myspace acts. Like, this guy booked a gig with acts just from My Space. And the talent was just amazing!"

So what's coming up for Dom Italiano? "I've got a lot of new gig ideas. Basically, my only day free on a regular basis is a Sunday, and I've wanted to do things at places where people could come and maybe not have to sit in a smokey pub. So I'm doing some café gigs and I've organised one at IMAX cinema. And there's the new band CD, which we're currently recording, but sort of slowly. That'll be out for early next year."

www.myspace.com/domitaliano

FAVE SONG LINES

DAN KELLY

"Many times I've wondered how much there is to know..."
Robert Plant - "Over the Hills and Far Away"

Dan says about the lyric -
"This is the ultimate hippy lyric! Deep on the surface, but actually quite dumb. You can wander around the shopping mall in your denim loons with your shirt off singing this all day".

JEFF LANG

"The ghost of electricity howls in the bones of her face" - Bob Dylan, Visions Of Johanna

JIM MOGINIE

I'd have to say my favourite line is in "Sunday Morning Coming Down" by Kris Kristofferson. It sets the song's tone in the first verse. The song deals brilliantly with the kind of loneliness a man separated from his family experiences. The line is ... "The beer I had for breakfast wasn't bad, so I had one more for dessert". The line is like a joke at a funeral. It's kind of an absurd line, but as he walks the city streets, listening to the sound of the 'sleeping city sidewalks' and hears and sees the things that remind him of what he has lost, he blames himself and it aches. But with that funny and intimate line, you really believe him.

KING CURLY:

"Pul'overs and sandals, and love handles, will never be in style ..."
"Family Man"-King Curly

VANESSA RAINE:

"You're in my blood line like holy wine, you taste so bitter and so sweet oh I could drink a case of you, and I'd still be on my feet" - 'A Case of You' Joni Mitchell

DOM ITALIANO:

"The thought that life could be better is woven indelibly into our hearts and our brains"
'Train in the Distance'
-Paul Simon

• 'My baby's so vain, she is almost a mirror, and the sound of her name, sends a nervous shiver down my spine' -Nick Cave

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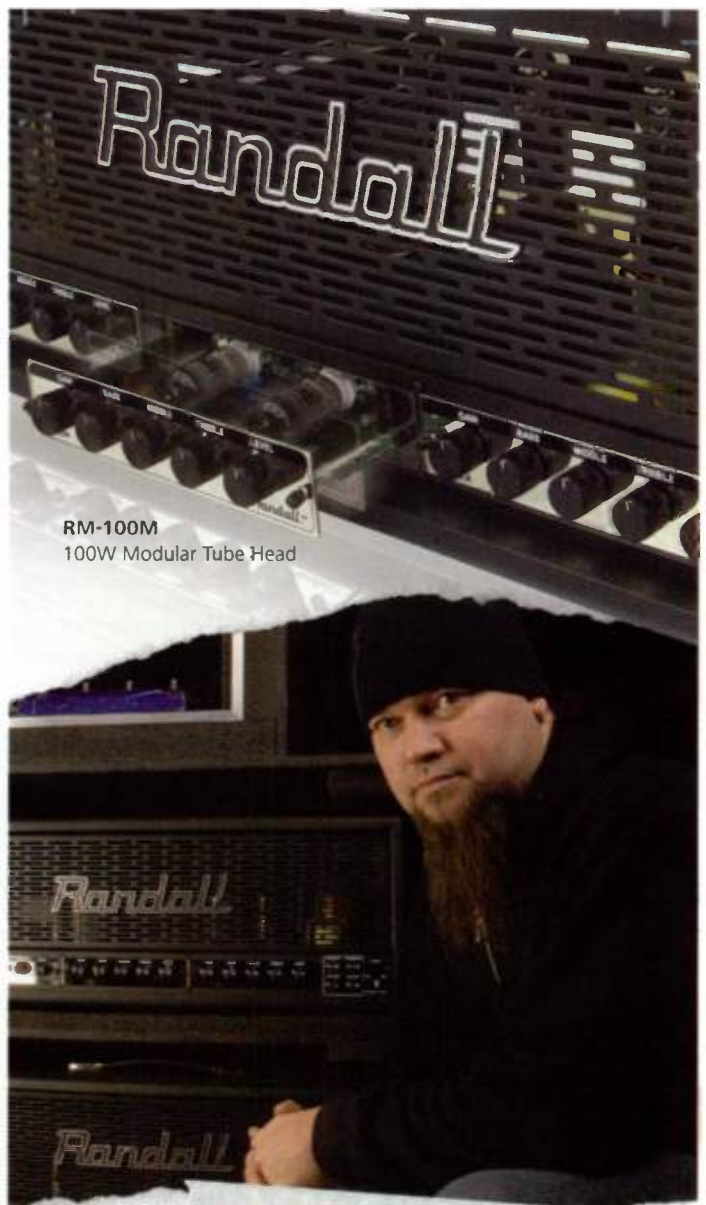
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1.....
2.....
3.....

B. WHO IS THE MOST RESPECTED INTERNATIONAL MUSICIAN?

1.....
2.....
3.....

C. ALBUM THAT CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

1.....
2.....
3.....

D. BEST ALBUM TITLE?

1.....
2.....
3.....

E. BEST ALBUM COVER ART?

1.....
2.....
3.....

F. WHO IS THE COOLEST PERSON IN ROCK MUSIC?

1.....
2.....
3.....

G. HAPPIEST SONG EVER?

1.....
2.....
3.....

H. SADDEST SONG EVER?

1.....
2.....
3.....

I. FAVE GUITAR CHORD?

1.....
2.....
3.....

J. BEST SOLO ALBUM BY SOMEONE FROM A BAND?

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2.....
3.....

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1.....
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TOMMY



Pics by Marty Williams

World Radio History

Australian Musician Spinning 2016

Y EMMANUEL

A new album (*The Mystery*), a DVD (*Live at Her Majestys*) and an ever-growing international fan base has Tommy Emmanuel grinning from ear to ear. Tom was in the midst of a US tour when he found time to call up Greg Phillips for a chat.

"It's a blessed life in a major way," remarked Australian guitar virtuoso Tommy Emmanuel in reference to his lifestyle. "The places I am playing now are much bigger than a couple of years ago and things are really building in an organic way." He was speaking down the phone line to me from Syracuse, New York state having just arrived from a gig, media commitments and a master class in Toronto, Canada. The tour he was on was due to wrap in Kentucky in early July, heralding the beginning of new east coast US tour. The following month he was due to head to Germany for his own guitar festival. Come September, he's back in America, before finally heading to Australia for a tour in October. Slotted in after his antipodean performances are stints in South Korea, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany again and England. Such is the life of the acclaimed international performer, whom guitar legend Chet Atkins labelled "The best fingerstyle guitarist on the planet."

In order to capitalise on his ever growing international stature, Tommy relocated to Nashville in June, however he has so far only managed to spend two weeks there. While he travels the world picking up an abundance of new fans on a nightly basis, a new album release can only further increase the momentum of his global acceptance. *The Mystery* is a beautifully recorded album consisting of twelve heart felt tunes, played with the precision and passion we come to expect from Emmanuel. A surprise to many however, will be the inclusion of a vocal track, "Walls" in which he duets with partner Liz Watkins. "I'm not really a singer," said Emmanuel of the experience. "I can get away with it. If I sing with all my heart and conviction then I think people will still like it. I made a last minute decision to record the vocal song ... and I went in and did my vocal part and Liz did her part. Then I thought I'd try a bit of lead on it. So I put a second guitar part down. I thought then, I'll put a little bass down, and then... 'damn, it needs drums', so I played the drums on it too! So it sounds like a band but it's actually all me. It seemed to work very well."

The album was produced and engineered by Kim Person, who had worked previously on recordings by Tommy's friend and fellow guitar picker Stephen Bennett. Together, Person and Emmanuel have perfectly captured every nuance of the maestro's fluid style of playing. "I was after an absolute pure sound. If you sat with your ear right next to my guitar, that's the sound you should hear through the speakers," explained Tom. "We used Kim's microphones and pre-amps. What I did this time was that I had two microphones in front of my guitar. I took a lead and plugged it into the little amp I use on stage (AER compact 60 amp). I put it in a separate room and put a microphone on the amp. The microphone in front of the guitar we left dry and when we come to mixing, we put the reverb on the amp signal. So we got that right up front clarity, then the reverb behind... a real depth and dimension to it but with that clarity."

Emmanuel used several guitars on the album, including his workhorse Maton EBG 808 TE, a Maton TE Custom Jumbo, a borrowed Travis Williams Dreadnought, Gibson J185, Fender Tele, and his brand new Maton custom

shop guitar which the kind people at Maton built as a gift to celebrate Tommy's 50th birthday, as well as acknowledging his longtime allegiance to the Maton brand. "It's beautiful," Emmanuel said of his new toy. "It has rosewood back and sides and neck, not just the fretboard, but the whole neck. I used it on the song 'The Diggers' Waltz'."

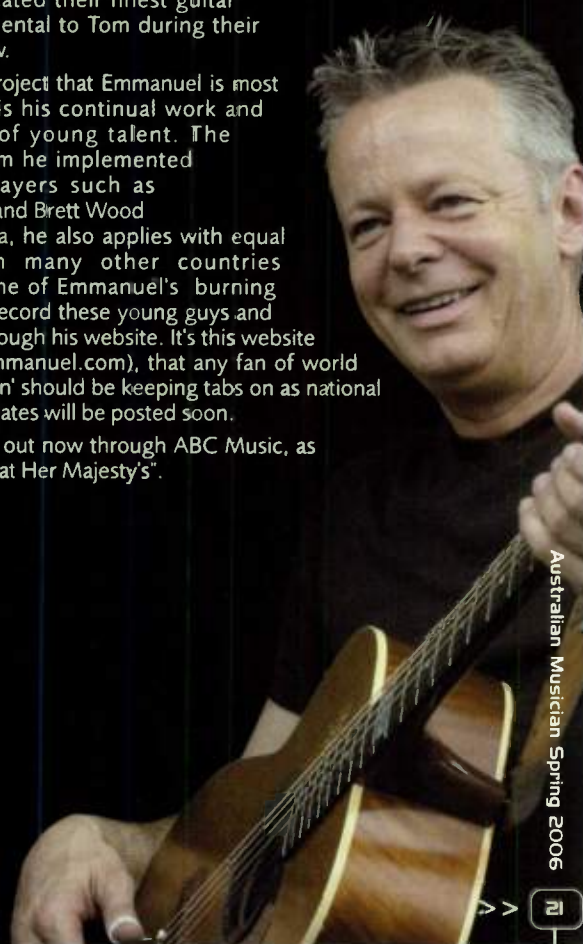
The presentation of the custom-built guitar to Tommy is captured as one of the extras on his new DVD 'Live at Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat, Australia'. Apart from duets with Liz Watkins, Tommy has worked solo for some time now and his current show and the intimacy he forges with his audience is immediately apparent on this DVD. The solo show set up works perfectly for Tom. Not only does it provide economic benefits for the world traveller, but also allows him to tailor his shows for the moment rather than having to synch with a light show or be restricted by a full band situation with its repertoire limitations. It also greatly narrows the chances of any Spinal Tap-like mishaps occurring. "When I play my solos shows, particularly when I don't have my own sound and lighting people... I just tell them how I want everything and just to leave them, don't touch them! Just turn the sound on and it's fool proof. If you have to rely on others then you haven't got your own stuff together. I like to be in charge of what I am doing. I know how I like it to sound," said Emmanuel.

As for the future, Emmanuel has many projects in mind, including an album of duets with other guitarists. "Like a Tommy and friends project," he explained. "That's one pipe dream. There are a lot of people I'd like to work with. I'd like to write a song or at least play on a song with James Taylor. I have a lot of people I'd like to work with. It's just a matter of finding the time. I'd also like to be able to get some of my music in films."

When the time finally arrives for Tom to record an album with friends, I'm sure some of the world's greats will be lining up to lend a hand. For example, while The Doobie Brother's Patrick Simmons was in town earlier this year, it was Emmanuel that he enquired about and the band dedicated their finest guitar picking instrumental to Tom during their Melbourne show.

However, the project that Emmanuel is most excited about is his continual work and development of young talent. The mentor program he implemented with guitar players such as Kieran Murphy and Brett Wood here in Australia, he also applies with equal enthusiasm in many other countries worldwide. One of Emmanuel's burning ambitions is to record these young guys and market them through his website. It's this website (www.tommyemmanuel.com), that any fan of world class guitar pickin' should be keeping tabs on as national Australian tour dates will be posted soon.

'The Mystery' is out now through ABC Music, as is his DVD 'Live at Her Majesty's'.



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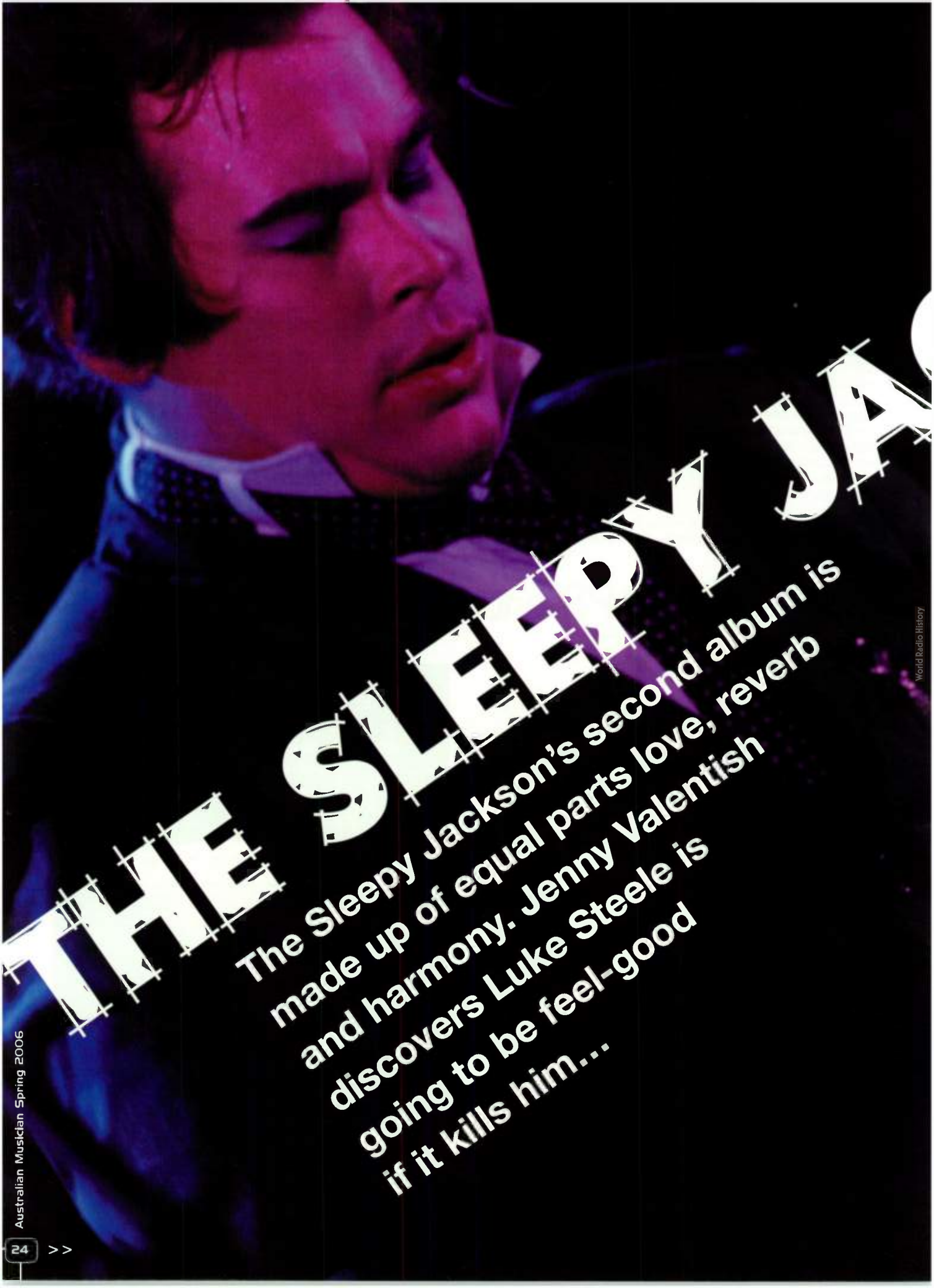
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THE SLEEPY JACKSON

The Sleepy Jackson's second album is made up of equal parts love, reverb and harmony. Jenny Valentish discovers Luke Steele is going to be feel-good if it kills him...

KINGSOON

"It was pretty strict in the studio, hey?"

Luke Steele says with a snap of his fingers.

"Everyone had to wear a suit, there was no alcohol, it was a real kind of Dean Martin session. The song's there, the band's looking good and we're running a real tight schedule."

Luke's wearing a suit as we speak, a smooth black number with some nautical accessories. His handshake is crushing. An acoustic guitar helps him to articulate feelings and ideas that can't be put into words.

With the release of The Sleepys' second album, *Personality: One Was A Spider One Was A Bird*, it becomes clear Luke shares both the symphonic style and eccentricity of luminaries like Phil Spector and Brian Wilson. It's an intricately crafted epic eked out of sweat and tears.

"It surprises me how much energy I have because I take it so seriously, you know? I get up, make sure I have breakfast, have only two coffees and only so many cigarettes. I was working everyone so hard. Everyone's getting tired and I'm still singing ten hours a day," he says, looking weary at the thought.

For some reason people like to criticise Luke Steele's work ethic, but it's a simple theory of if you want something done properly do it yourself. Can't hack it? Well never mind. Neither could the previous band.

It's a mentality acquired through grafting at an early age. Luke describes the chicken-wired dives he and brother Jesse used to play as teens, particularly his father's Perth Blues Club, the website of which declares with strangely familiar bombast: "You will note we have carefully avoided revealing the secret of Club President Rick Steele's charisma – we want you to do that for us."

"My father would be playing JJ Cale songs to 500 people and he'd go: 'Luke's in the crowd!'" says Steele Jnr, "so I'd have to be able to show off. We did a lot of Stevie Ray Vaughan, and I went through my Kenny Burrell stage and my Chet Atkins stage. I went out with this girl from Norway, she went back to Norway and I fell into my James Taylor phase. Then there's Stevie and Hendrix."

Can he shred, then?

"Ye-a-h," he intones, looking at me like I'm crazy. "I've got a few chops down. I got sick of 12-bar blues – it's the cement mixer of music for me – and when I was about 16 I realised I had to start writing melodies. But I could always play blues leads through that whole period of writing pop songs. These latest songs are 140 tempo and they're starting to get more spritely, but I'm coming back to futuristic Beefheart blues, music that you can dance to."

The guitar's a lot more subtle on this album, used as the backbone that holds everything together. The minimalistic solos and frisky rhythm parts are structured in mathematical grids in Luke's head, which he describes with almost autistic fervour. He references Kraftwerk, Prince and Cornelius, and gesticulates what I presume to mean a funky feel. The vocals, too, shift like sands in the tide, obeying an undulating rhythm over articulation.

"On You Needed More," he says, enunciating a verse for me like he's nudging forth an awkward child, "it's really pushing it so that it's got a perfect hop about it."

While Luke allows the song to wander off whimsically in the middle-eight, everything lands perfectly and precisely back on that grid for the chorus, like a sonic boom.

Through hand gestures and waves, I'm starting to understand. The androgynous harmonies throughout the album are layered up to 80 times, then bounced down for a thick, ethereal quality. It's mainly Luke alone (at one point he was forced to record at The Hyatt after he lost his voice during studio time), but on *Dream On* and *I Understand What You Want But I Just Don't Agree* he's joined by Juanita Tippens, a renowned Maori backing singer. "Her voice always reminds me of jumping off a diving board," Luke says fondly.

Demos were recorded in Luke's rather anarchic home studio ("you've got to throw everything against the wall to get it working"), and then at BigJesusBurger with Scott Horcroft.

"He's a real experimental soundscaper," Luke says approvingly. "He'd buy these condoms that vibrate and put them on a set of vibraphones so that they would resonate like an eBow. Or he'd get those little handheld fans and touch them to the guitar strings. He was all about slapbacks, so you'd have a short slapback on the snare, like 't, t, t', with a longer one on the vocal."

I'M MORE ABOUT PUSHING THE ARTIST UNTIL THEY'RE JUST ABOUT GOING CRAZY TO GET THAT PERFECT TAKE

Perhaps because Luke's a keen surfer, these new songs have the breathing rhythm of the sea. As well as being huge – with a brass section and an orchestra brought in from Prague – the production's warm, with many instruments running through a plate reverb.

"It was all recorded on analogue, bounced down to 96k, which is the highest sampling rate on ProTools," Luke says.

It's easy to imagine Steele as the crazed conductor, energetically directing the bass "up and jumping" ahead of the beat, and getting everything to "hiccup" together. His latest crew consists of Lee Jones from Perth band Spencer Tracy, Dave Symes on bass, session percussionist Felix Boxsom and the ever faithful Malcolm Clark on drums.

Continued over page

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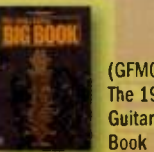
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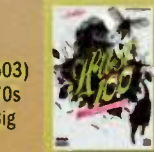
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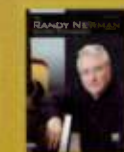
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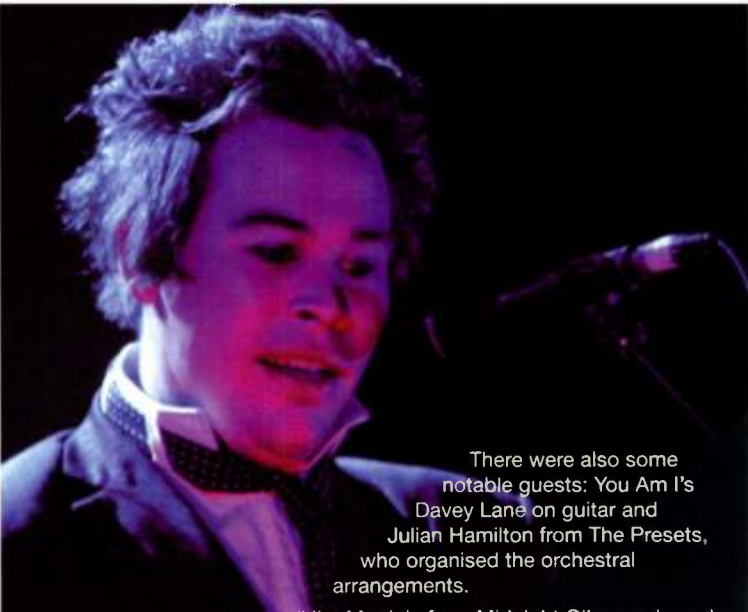
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There were also some notable guests: You Am I's Davey Lane on guitar and Julian Hamilton from The Presets, who organised the orchestral arrangements.

"Jim Moginie from Midnight Oil came in and played on the record, and he brought his guitars with him," Luke is pleased to report. "He had a Vox with a tremolo built in [possibly a rare Phantom], and we were also using heaps of Telecasters, big Martin acoustics and a really nice Rickenbacker 12-string. I played the solo of *Play A Little Bit For Love* on a Thinline Tele because the humbuckers sound real warm, but my favourite guitar has to be an old Fender Jaguar. It has a '50s-style mute on the bridge so you can click it down on the strings, Johnny Cash style. It was so killer. So most of the record is the Jaguar with the mute on as a backbone, like a progrock Neu thing. You can hardly hear it."

Luke occasionally detuned his guitar to a standard tuning in low C, inspired by Beck. "You hit a chord and the strings are slack. I love that, hey? Especially when you play blues. It's a bastard to keep in tune because the strings are all floppy." Ampwise, Marshall was the order of

the day, with Luke mainly utilising an old '70s head and some JCM800 cabs. While he doesn't get time to browse on tour, he's a new convert to eBay, where his proudest purchase is an Electro-Harmonix Hot Tubes pedal for \$150 – a vast improvement on the \$700 he paid for its predecessor.

"I still reckon Boss Bluesdrivers are a killer sound," he says. "In the old days it was Tubescreamers because Stevie Ray used them. I reckon Tubescreamers sound cool through a Strat, but Teles need clean overdrive you can get from Bluesdrivers. I use three of them, each with increasing levels of gain so it doesn't get too square and lose all its guts. Then digital delays pedals are the best. Every muso should have a Line 6, man. If they were around in the old days... if you play a wrong note then you stuff up a loop, so you've got to be tight."

I enquire whether Luke's landed any plum endorsement deals with any home brands.

"We'd love an endorsement from Maton ... so maybe I should mention here how great their 12-strings and big jumbo acoustics are."

Although you can bet your boots the next Sleepys album will be 180 degrees different, Luke's into the idea of working with Scott again.

"He's so forgiving," he admits, describing how Horscroft likes to get something down and move on. "I'm more about pushing the artist until they're just about going crazy to get that perfect take. But we're quite similar – it's all about creating more art and keeping inspired. It got hard at the end because we were just both so exhausted. It changed both of our lives drastically. We'll always be mates because we got through it."

"With the last record things got tough and then I had a huge fight with John Burnside," Luke says in some bewilderment, "and I never spoke to him again."

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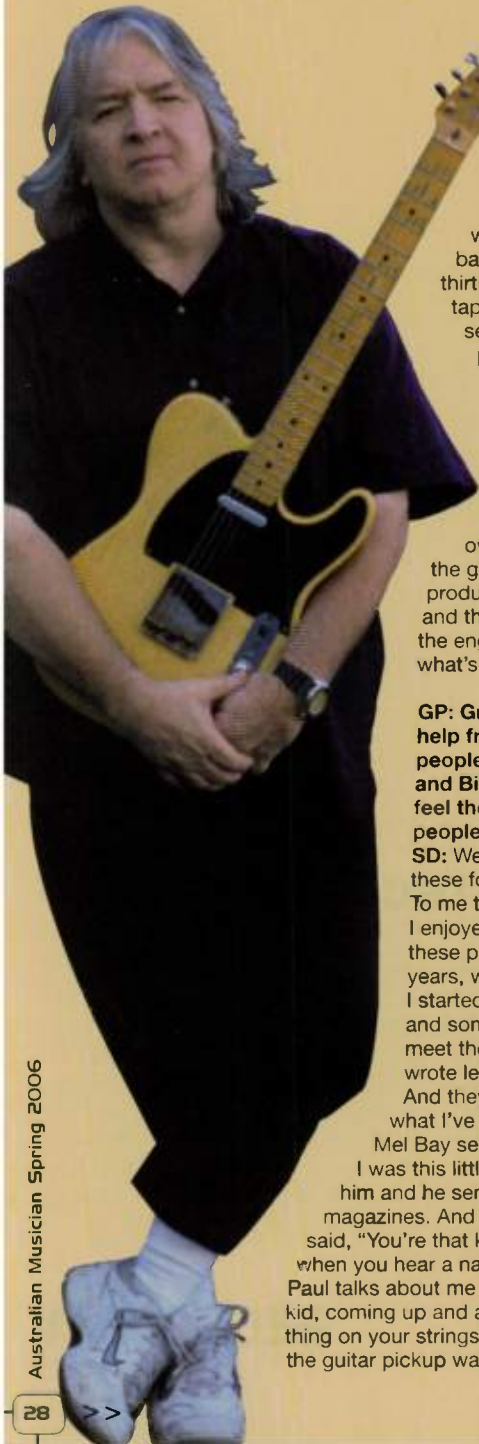


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SEYMOUR DUNCAN

His name is as equally identifiable as the guitar heroes whose tone he helped to create. His knowledge of the guitar and its inner workings is nothing short of amazing. A crude definition of what Seymour Duncan does for a living is that he winds copper wire around a magnet ... but it's the way he does it in producing his famous guitar pickups that has made him the legend he is today. In his youth, New Jersey born Seymour Duncan had an insatiable thirst to know what made things tick, resulting in the disassembly of many household items including TVs and radios. However it was that inquisitive nature that lead Seymour to amass an infinite amount of electronic knowledge, leading to the establishment of one of the world's most celebrated guitar pick up businesses. At the encouragement of guitarist friend Roy Buchanan, Seymour flew to London in the early seventies and found himself working at the Fender Soundhouse doing repairs for guitar greats such as Hendrix, Beck, Clapton and Jimmy Page. Armed with that vital experience, Seymour returned to America and in 1978, along with Cathy Carter Duncan, started their own pick up company. Ever since, Seymour Duncan has been at the forefront of guitar pickup technology working with everyone from Eddie Van Halen and Dimebag Darrell, to Red Hot Chili Peppers and Grinspoon. Australian Musician's Greg Phillips spoke to Seymour prior to his Australian clinic tour in September.



GP: What do you believe are that most important factors that got you where you are today?

SD: Probably listening to music growing up. I was an only child and my uncle, who worked for a famous band during the forties and thirties, had a guitar. I would tape record every show I would see on TV that had a guitar player. I've had so many great influences in my life and then being able to talk to someone is great. You know I can go and talk to the people that work in manufacturing, who not even so much as own a little company, but to the guys who work in the production line and the painters and the guys that fabricate or do the engraving. I mean for me, that's what's great.

GP: Growing up, you had a lot of help from some important people, like Mel Bay and Les Paul and Bill Carson, is that why you feel the need to offer advice to people?

SD: Well, yeah. I think that because these folks were so generous to me. To me those guys were rock stars. I enjoyed meeting and talking to these people and then over the years, writing letters to them. When I started doing all the music shows and some of the award shows, you meet the people that you actually wrote letters to, and it's very cool. And they're proud of you too, for what I've accomplished. Like I met Mel Bay several years ago. I told him I was this little kid that used to write to him and he sent me all the Mel Bay magazines. And he just looked at me and said, "You're that kid" So for me it's very neat, when you hear a national radio show and Les Paul talks about me as a little thirteen-year-old kid, coming up and asking "Mr Paul? What is that thing on your strings?" and he explained what the guitar pickup was to me and it really, just ...

I was so hungry for information about the guitar. I sent many applications to Fender while I was a little kid, wanting to work for them. That didn't become (laughs), 'cause I lived kinda far away I think. But, the people in the main factories like Ted McCarty was very helpful to me and he explained a lot to me growing up and stuff and I would visit him in Michigan. So it was pretty cool, you know.

GP: You mentioned taping music off the TV. You also turned the TV into an amplifier I believe?

SD: Right, yeah. I would hook into the actual TV and one time I hid it from my Mom and Dad, and all of a sudden I had this long cord into my bedroom and they're out in the kitchen. All of a sudden they heard this guitar coming through the TV set and freaked out about it. But it was neat. I used to try to work like radios, and go into the pre-amp system of all your typical am/fm radio stuff. And a lot of world 2 bands too, which were really cool. You'd find the input, and you'd just separate the input from the radio signal, and do the input from the guitar channel, and sometimes it would distort really bad. I used to do funny things using my cassette players and stuff. When I was younger I used to put a guitar jack on the end of the player in the car, so you could actually play back on it. This was like the seventies and eighties when the 8-track was becoming very popular. Plug the 8-track into your car, and then run the wire to your guitar and you could actually hear it through your car system.

GP: Why do you think it is that vintage pickups are so popular?

SD: I think part of it is the quality of the instruments that were being made at the time, the materials that were being used. A lot of the time you can't even use them anymore, like certain kinds of old lacquers. The newer lacquers have plasticisers in them, so they don't wear the same. And everybody starts making guitars out of polyester because they can manufacture them a lot faster, and the paint would dry faster, and everybody just got into making so many guitars. At one time, you know, Fender was gonna drop the Stratocaster back in the sixties until Jimi Hendrix made it popular. The biggest thing is that people knew that things were handmade and the quality and the tone that people were getting from all these old guitars. Then a lot of the companies started changing their components over the years because the old stuff wasn't available anymore. or they were trying to go with new technology. They were going into solid state amplifiers, which really didn't make it that well in the eighties and people were still trying to find a tone. You listen to old records by Steve Cropper, Booker T and MGs ... you listen to the old Jeff Beck stuff ... you listen to Roy Buchanan and Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, you know, and all these guys are using older guitars. And then there's that next generation of guitar players. We started having great players Eddie Van Halen, and the older generation was a second influence to the younger guys. We were all looking trying to find the old tone of all these old guitars. And then I started doing all this vintage stuff and that became a real mainstream for our company, 'cause they knew that I was really listening to the tone, hanging out with Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton and Jimmy Page from Led Zeppelin and Roy Buchanan and guys, all these guys I had been affiliated with, you know. So that sorta really got us into developing a lot of vintage products and bringing it back to the public.

GP: You sometimes relate a story about guitarist Andy Summers at your clinics, could you tell me about that?

SD: Andy would ride on the London Underground tube system and he would get on the same area of the train. It was like his favourite spot, where he could put his guitar and everything after a gig. He realised that the place where he put his guitar was part of the transformer and engine system. The electromagnets in it degaussed the pickup in his guitar. He brought the guitar to me and he said, "Man, you know, the guitar is just so low, you know, there's no output from it anymore." And the pickup worked, the coils were working fine, and I said, "Oh man, you're pickup checks out." And then I recharged it for him and when I did it, it put it beyond what it was originally... where he liked it, like a sweet tone type of thing. So then I started degaussing and then I got into really changing the calibration on the magnet and that started a whole new area of Seymour Duncan pickups. And by changing the magnetic strength you can change the tone of the pickup and get it where it's sounding really sweet, where it suits the player.

GP: I've been told that you have some pickups in jars of water that have been there for a long time. What's that all about?

SD: Well, years ago Billy Gibbons said to me, "Would a pickup work underwater?" and I said, I don't see why not, you know, 'cause the insulation is pretty much shielded. So in 1974, we did a thing and then, there was another date somewhere... May of 1978, I put a humbucker pickup in just a jar of water. There's all this mystique about what else was in the jar besides water, like Billy Gibbons' urine and all this stuff. You know, all this insane stuff. You have to spice it up a little. But the pickup, it looks absolutely disgusting, 'cause it's been in there since 1978, and last time we checked it still worked. But every time Billy comes by, it's still inside the jar. So it's good to have it here. It's called the Seymour Duncan Pickled Pickup by Billy Gibbons. The water, we call "tone juice", 'cause it's inside the jar and it's kinda neat.

GP: What advice would you give to a guitarist who for years has emulated his or her heroes, but now wants to find their own unique tone?

SD: I really think that it's very important for these kids to realise that. I tell them at the beginning, so many of them come and want to buy Van Halen or Randy Rhodes or Alan Holdsworth or Jeff Becks or something, and I say guys ... they already sound like who they are. So much of it is in the style of playing that I really try to teach them to find their own tone. That's why we make so many pickups too, and so many different variations of that magnet and coil stuff, just so guitar players can stick something in and find that tone that he really loves, that'll inspire him. Having a pickup that sounds the way you want to play or makes you play the way you wanna play is so important, and that's why we do it. There's some manufacturers that say, "Oh, all you need is one pickup and you can sound like anything," and you can't, you know, you really can't. You've gotta match the pickup to the wood. We do seminars where we talk about the wood and the relationship between the coils and the magnets and how everything works with each other. And it's important for kids to realise that.

GP: Do you think it's necessary for the young people to know something about the electronics of a guitar?

SD: Oh I think so, I mean I've always been that way, because I remember somebody borrowed my guitar one time and they broke the lead pickup and they got the high E string stuck under the bridge pickup and there's nobody to fix it. Nobody around where I grew up in southern New Jersey knew about guitar pickups or how they were made or anything. So, I dived into it and I took my pickup apart when I was in high school, and I put it under a microscope and decided to see how it was working. By having myself not really afraid to go in there and take my guitar apart, that started me as a guitar repairman growing

up. I soon became the guy, the local guy, who was working on everyone's guitars.

GP: Seth Lover thought he didn't get much credit for a lot of the pioneering work that he did, but he was very happy with the SH55 pickups you created. It must have given you a lot of satisfaction to produce those?

SD: Oh, it was such a thrill to me because he was such a gentleman. He was only making a few dollars from the retirement from Gibson and Fender, and so to be able to make something for him and put his name on it, it was such an honour. He really took to our company. We really helped him a lot with wanting him to let us use his name and everything. So he was so good at being there for us, when we talked about how we wanted to do the pickup and everything. He was responsible for so many things, like working on a design for the Flying V, the Explorer, the Varitone in the amplifiers and everything and the varied tone on the 355 and the 345 Gibsons. He was a brilliant man and he was just doing his day to day job. Evan Scott, my marketing guy, and myself went down to his house to talk to him about it and he was so thrilled. He didn't really care about the money for himself, he just wanted to have it to show to his grandchildren, to give them money for education and everything, which I thought was wonderful.

GP: Likewise, you must have been proud when the Fender people decided to produce the Seymour Duncan Esquire model guitar?

SD: Oh right, yeah. That was through Evan too, you know, we were doing a lot of marketing things and Evan and the guys all talked and they thought it was a pretty good idea, so they sent them a contract, which I think was very nice (laughs). The Esquire, I have always loved because of the simplicity, and then also being able to get the maximum tone and output. So it has a tap bridge pickup, and it has unique wiring in it and I rewind the pickup and I do all the harnessing and everything for them. So it's really kind of a neat thing to

have that and I'm still honoured by it, you know, 'cause I'm the only Fender artist that never had a record contract for guitar playing, but I'm very proud of that.

GP: You released a range of pedals. What made you diversify into that area?

SD: Well partly because at one time we were doing the convertible amplifiers, where we had some really unique designs and everything and, you know, the amplifier had modules in it for enhancing the tone or to change the output of the amplifier. We had actually like a Varitone variable power supply. Variac almost. One amp, that you could put it down to a ten watt amplifier if you wanted it or put it up to 100 watt if you wanted it. So, the pedal thing was sort of a fun thing for us to do to experiment. We have such great engineers and I said, "Man, let's go for it". So we came up with something unique. It's got stomp boxes, we got the FX03 twin, the two classics, which is awesome two powered overdrive, which is really kinda unique too. We're looking forward to come see you guys when we're finished with it, so you can hear it, and the kids can hear it too, and it's all education, you know, to get the kids out there. So, I hope I have the chance to see a lot of players and stuff and you know, young guys out there, ladies, you know.

GP: Ok, so what does the future hold for Seymour Duncan?

SD: Well, we're still designing a lot of products and I still want to keep doing what I did for the past thirty years. Keep playing and trying to help young guitar players find the tone for themselves, developing products. And I still want to play with the band that I have in Santa Barbara here, do a lot of shows and going out to seminars and doing all the amp shows.

For information on the Seymour Duncan clinic tour, visit www.dominantmusic.com.au/sdtour



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GUITARS

NEW YORK DOLLS

Ever wondered how the word 'Trash' became part of the rock n' roll vernacular? Proto-punk band The New York Dolls is not a bad place to start. With a mix of Bolanesque glam and Rolling Stones' swagger, the lipstick wearing, cigarette smokin' band fronted by the enigmatic singer David Johansen, stumbled their way through the early seventies, losing band members at a rapid rate, succumbing to the hedonistic lifestyle the band subscribed to. The Dolls featured legendary names like Johnny Thunders, Arthur Kane and Jerry Nolan, seminal figures in the birth of punk rock. After only a couple of largely ignored albums, by 1976 the band was all Dolled -out. However their name and reputation have lived on and grown with every passing year. Fast forward three decades and Johansen, along with guitarist Sylvain Sylvain are back with a brand new album, 'One Day It Will Please Us To Remember Even This', featuring that old larrikin NYD spirit. Intrigued to know what the catalyst was for the band's second coming, Australian Musician's Greg Phillips placed a call to David Johansen who spoke from his palatial New York City 'mansion of fun'.

DJ: Oh Christ. The way it happened was... Morrissey called us. He had been the President of the fan club when he was a kid. He was putting on this thing in England and he asked us to play. When I went into it, it was gonna be a one-off show. There was no commitment or anything, it was just gonna be fun. Then we started getting calls to do big gigs like Reading and Leeds. People would come in and see like a hundred bands, you know, they're not coming just to see you. So when we did those gigs, everybody really dug us. Not only that, they were singing along to all our songs and everything, and I thought "Man, this is really good!" So we just started taking gigs one at a time, and we didn't have any plans beyond that, and then I guess we were doing it for about a year. And then we had a couple of songs we had come up with and we made a demo of them and we thought these are as good as anything, we might as well make a record.

GP: So, when you were thinking about recording the album, what were the ingredients that had to be there for you to make the album work?

DJ: Well I'll tell you the truth, we had three songs that we had written in soundcheck in the one night. We had put them in the show, you know... not all of them in one show, but we played one, one night, one the next night. They were going over pretty good, and then we went to that South by Southwest, which is this music conference down in Austin, Texas where all the record companies go to look at new bands. They're playing in bathrooms, they're playing on the roof, they're playing everywhere. So I went down there and announced on the stage that we were looking for a record deal. Then Roadrunner Records said "Yeah, we want to make a record with you", so we said "cool". And then, I guess about a month or two before we were actually booked into the studio, everybody's yelling at us... "You f***ing guys better get this along. So essentially we locked ourselves in our room and started banging out tunes, you know, and pretty much, that's what it is."

GP: You've recorded with Sylvain before, with your solo stuff. Was there a real sense that this was a New York Dolls project?

DJ: Well you know it's funny, because I went through a lot of different ideas about that because when we were first back together again we played in LA a couple of times. I remember Clem Burke, who was the drummer in Blondie came by and I noticed him and went and said hello. At three different gigs I said to him, "So, what do you think of the band?" He's like, "I love the band, why do you think I keep coming back? This is the f***ing Dolls man! The Dolls!". I was thinking like, OK but I had a band after the Dolls, you know... called it a different name, but potentially me and Syl. He didn't really give a shit about that. He goes, "No man, because this is the Dolls!" And I'm like... OK, I'm not fighting this. We got a logo, so I guess in this society we live in, it's like Chevrolet or something.

GP: In the eighties a lot of bands like Poison and Motley Crue came out of LA looking like the Dolls. What were your thoughts when you first saw those guys?

DJ: Uh, (laughs) you know I have to say I was amused. I mean I actually probably laughed out loud a couple of times. So, that's pretty much what I thought. They were kinda of like geeky guys, I guess, trying to do what they thought rock and roll was, but musically I couldn't really get behind them. Usually I'd see them

on MTV or something and I'd have the sound down and I'd be listening to something else anyway. I would kinda laugh when I saw them though, cause they would be doing like these guitar heroics and stuff, which is funny.

GP: Malcolm McLaren tried to manage the Dolls at a late stage, what do you recall about that era of the band?

DJ: He kinda showed up in our last month, and said, "Boys, I'm gonna help you out", and we were like... "Man, wow", as much as you think you can do it, half the band is strung out. We're really thinking about calling it a day." He was like, "Come on, let's give it one more try". So I think, he hung around for about a month and tried to help us out, but it was over already. We didn't do anything really productive while he was around. You know, over the years his wife has made some pretty 'choice' costumes for us, but as far as his actual hands on involvement, it was literally the living end, and we didn't do any writing or recording or anything when he was around. But when he went back to England he told he told the kids in his shop, "Oh, I managed the Dolls", you know... helped us get a leg up I guess. You've gotta love him for it. Whatever gets you going, I think his involvement with the Dolls is really exaggerated. I think what he did, he came over and like studied the Dolls and then tried to translate that into some English bands or something.

GP: You must have had some great Spinal Tap-like moments over the years. Any that stick in mind?

DJ: Oh jeez. You know, I mean it's like every day Spinal Tap moments happen. It's like going to a special ed school or something, where the kids have to wear helmets 'cause they fall down a lot. So... (laughs) it's really not rocket science to be in a rock and roll band. There's a lot of silliness. But you know, if you have a sense of humour about it, it's really good.

GP: So what's happening with the Dolls now?

DJ: I would imagine that we're going to play for a while and then, I guess if the record company wants another record we would make one.



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GEORGE LYNCH

Emerging out of LA's then exploding '80s Sunset Strip scene, George Lynch etched himself into the rock guitar playing annals via the hugely successful hard rock combo Dokken. His intensely rapid fire style and unique approach earned him the title of 'Mr. Scary'. Upon exiting the band, he went on to form Lynch Mob as well as carving himself a successful solo career in his own right.

On a recent guitar clinic jaunt to Australia to showcase his new signature ESP guitar, JOE MATERA caught up with Lynch after an in-store in Melbourne for some "guitar talk"

How has your guitar playing expanded from the early days?

I think my guitar playing has done two things. I think it's expanded and contracted at the same time. So in my quest for evolving I seemed to have devolved, kind of full circle to where I started. There is a track on my Lost Lynch album that I did recently. The track is the first thing I ever recorded when I was 17 at the time. And though it's terrible and it's some friend's band, I thought it was interesting listening back to it as I really haven't changed fundamentally that much. And that's been like 30 something years ago. I think the essence of your playing is either there or not there. You either maintain or lose the essence of who you basically are.

You've been a solo artist for a while now so in that sense has that helped you come to a full realisation of who you as a guitar player?
I hope not because when the quest is complete, the game's over.

It's akin to those that say can master the instrument, but I disagree as you can't really master an instrument, it's unlimited...

It's not an instrument that you master it's sort of achieving this inner kind of thing that is illusive. I'd imagine it's the same for other musicians too. You kind of hear this thing in your head, this vision, this ideal musical kind of epic journey which has been formed in you head for as long as you can remember. For me I'll be riding my motorcycle somewhere and it always happens, I'll sort of imagine and play something in my head and imagine it playing it live or in the studio or somewhere yet I will never ever achieve that ideal performance. The reality never comes close to the kind of conjured up imaginative thing that I've got. It's this illusive goal.

I hear you have a signature Randall amp coming out that is based on two of your favourite Marshall heads from the '60s?

Yes a '67 and a '68 Plexi. I wouldn't say it's based on those totally but I created four modules [the Super V, Brahma, Mr. Scary, and the Grail] and the Brahma module is based on the '68 head which indeed is my favourite Marshall head. The cabinet is loosely based on a late '60s Hi Watt bass cabinet with 12" cast-frame speakers created with custom Eminence and the construction of the cabinet is similar to the Hi Watt. The power amp in the "Lynch Box" is basically a Marshall setup with all the bells and whistles.

So what other projects and gear are in the works?

Gear wise I've got a new ESP guitar called a Super V that contains a new pick up I designed with Seymour Duncan also called the Super V pickup. Dean Markley and I have got together too and designed a new string also called Super V strings, which is vintage high nickel content wounded pitch strings. I've got some pedal things that's going on in the mix right now going on too, but it's too early to say much about. I'm also working on a new record with the drummer from Disturbed and the bass player from Shadows Fall that will be coming out hopefully at the end of the year.

Your original J.Frog Skull 'n' Bones and Kramer guitars, have you retired them?

Yes, that original Skull 'n' Bones guitar is hanging in the Hard Rock cafe in Hollywood. The Kramer, I have no idea where it is today.

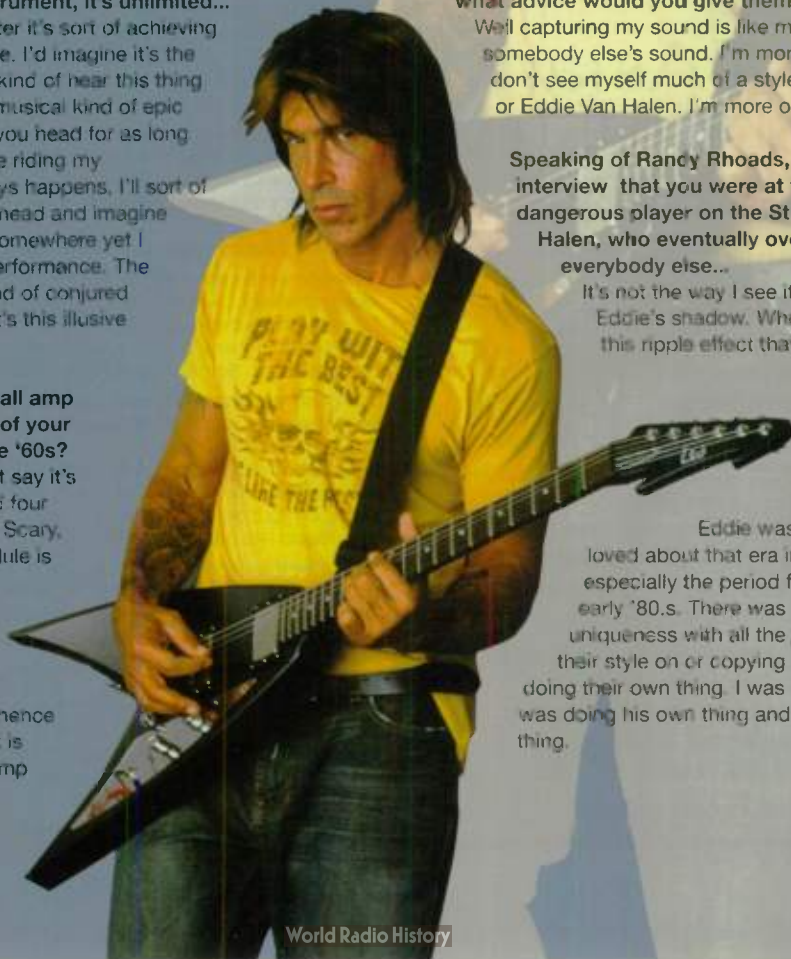
If players wanted to go about capturing the definite Lynch tone, what advice would you give them?

Well capturing my sound is like me trying to capture somebody else's sound. I'm more of a slave to my gear. I don't see myself much of a style player like Randy Rhoads or Eddie Van Halen. I'm more of a gear eccentric guy.

Speaking of Randy Rhoads, he once said in an interview that you were at the time the most dangerous player on the Strip and better than Van Halen, who eventually overshadowed you and everybody else...

It's not the way I see it. I think we were all in Eddie's shadow. When Eddie emerged it was this ripple effect that went through LA and soon all this melodic playing came to the fore. In retrospect, there was nobody as good or better really as everybody was trying to be different. And

Eddie was different which is what I loved about that era in Hollywood at the time especially the period from the mid '70s up until to early '80s. There was this great differentiation and uniqueness with all the players. Nobody was basing their style on or copying somebody else, they were doing their own thing. I was doing my own thing, Randy was doing his own thing and Eddie was doing his own thing.



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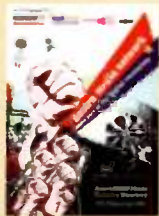
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MATISYAHU
In the often fickle and superficial world of rock n roll, US reggae/hip hop/beatbox artist Matisyahu is unique. It's his freshness in a copycat world that resulted in his first album "Live at Stubbs" selling more than 500,000 copies in the US and claiming the number one position on the reggae charts for six weeks in a row. Armed with a new studio album, "Youth" and a message of peace, Matisyahu recently made his first tour to Australia. GREG PHILLIPS caught up with him the day after he blitzed a Melbourne crowd.

The twenty seven year old Pennsylvania-born Matisyahu Mitchell is a strict follower of the Hasidic Jewish faith and as a result, is required to follow many guidelines foreign to the contemporary music environment. For any cynic who may deem the traditional Jewish skull cap and prayer scarf he adorns on stage as a publicity angle, having spent just a little time with him, I can vouch for his authenticity. For instance, the female record company promotional staff are forbidden to touch him, only females he is related to may do so. The music video channel people who had taped an interview prior to mine, was asked not to show the footage on a Saturday, the holy sabbath. Certain times are placed into his schedule for prayer and it takes no time at all while speaking with him to discern that his faith is his life, and his purpose is his faith. However, the serenity of Matisyahu's daily life is in stark contrast to his nocturnal habitat. At Melbourne's Prince of Wales pub, where Matisyahu played to a packed and very vocal house the previous evening, his passion for his faith manifested powerfully in his music and the crowd responded accordingly. The audience, who had no such lifestyle restrictions were swept away by the ambient grooves and extended exultant jams generated by the beatboxer and his amazingly talented band.

The following afternoon, he was completing a run of press commitments, dressed casually in track pants and entered the hotel suite set aside for interviews with an endearing innocence. On stage, there's a lot going on in Matisyahu's music with elements of improvisation and inclusion of dub and beatboxing phrases. I was interested to know how a virtual non-instrumentalist conveys his musical ideas to the band.

"Sometimes the band create the melodies themselves," the softly spoken Matisyahu said. "Actually Aaron, the guitarist on the new album did a couple himself. Then whenever I get a melody line, a lot of the time I will sing it to them, and then we'll work out the chords and Jonah will do his percussion bit. Sometimes I'll tinker it out on the piano a little bit."

The genre of music Matisyahu uses to power his musical message is old school reggae, admiring its properties of faith and devotion. It's a style that has been severely bastardised by many bands, UB40 being king culprits, but the brand of reggae this band plays is authentic, with its roots firmly entrenched in Kingston beats. "Reggae is much more than just party music or sitting on your porch drinking and listening to 'One Love'. At the core essence of it, music is a prayer" said Matisyahu on the subject.

As Matisyahu performed on stage rapping and rhyming, his thoughts turned to those on the other side of the world in less ecstatic surrounds. His message was not pro-Israel, nor anti-Hezbollah but anti-war. For someone who so openly displays his religious heart on his sleeve, I put it to him that his message, more than any other international artist may carry more weight at this moment in time. "I've been thinking about this a lot over the last couple of weeks" he said rocking back and forth in his chair, carefully considering the question. "Particularly being in Australia, which is such a beautiful country and I'm able to walk freely on the beautiful beaches while my brothers and sisters are living in bomb shelters and children are being killed... thinking about why I am here and what my purpose is."

Matisyahu and band promise to be back in Australia spreading their message in January 2007.

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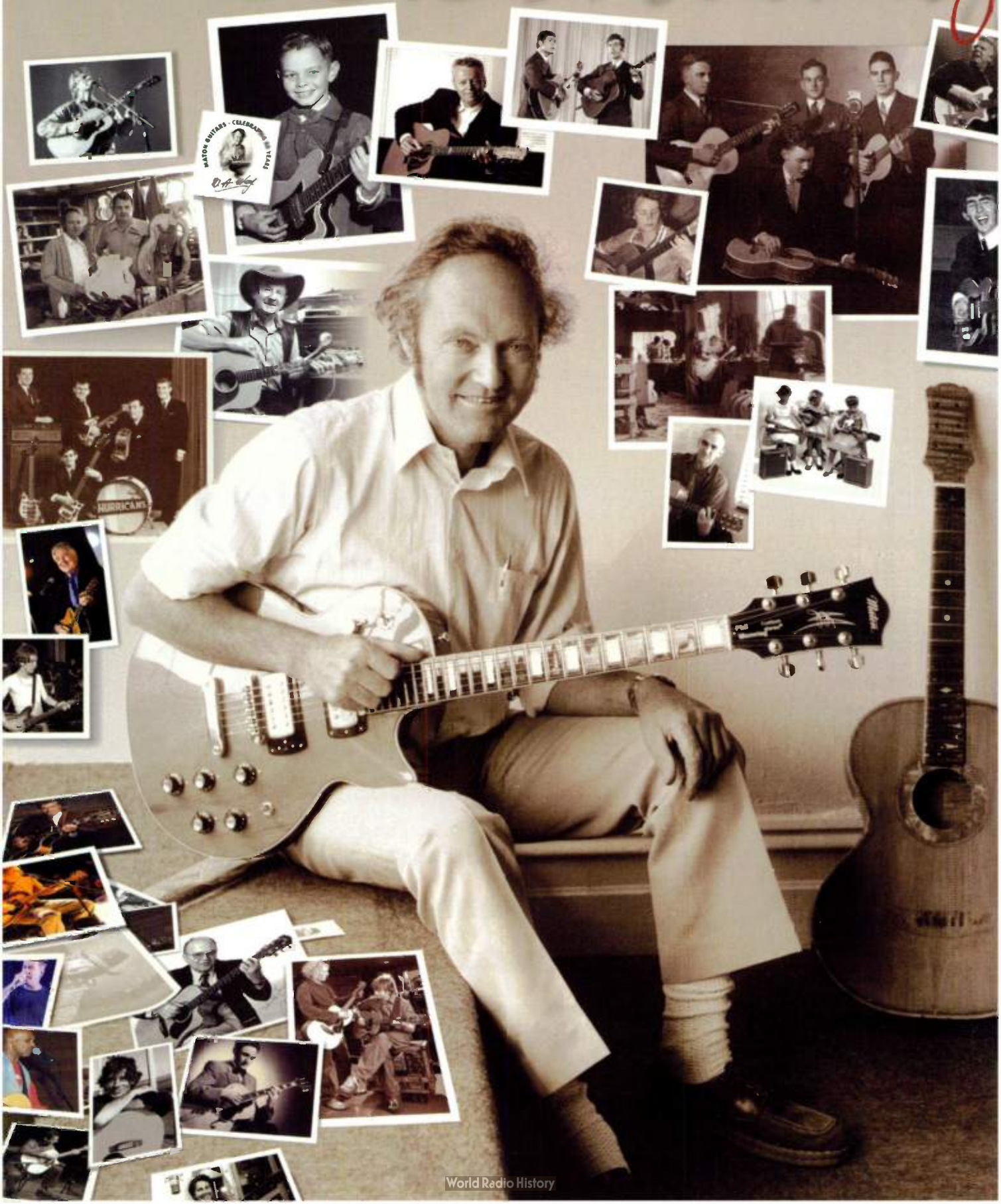
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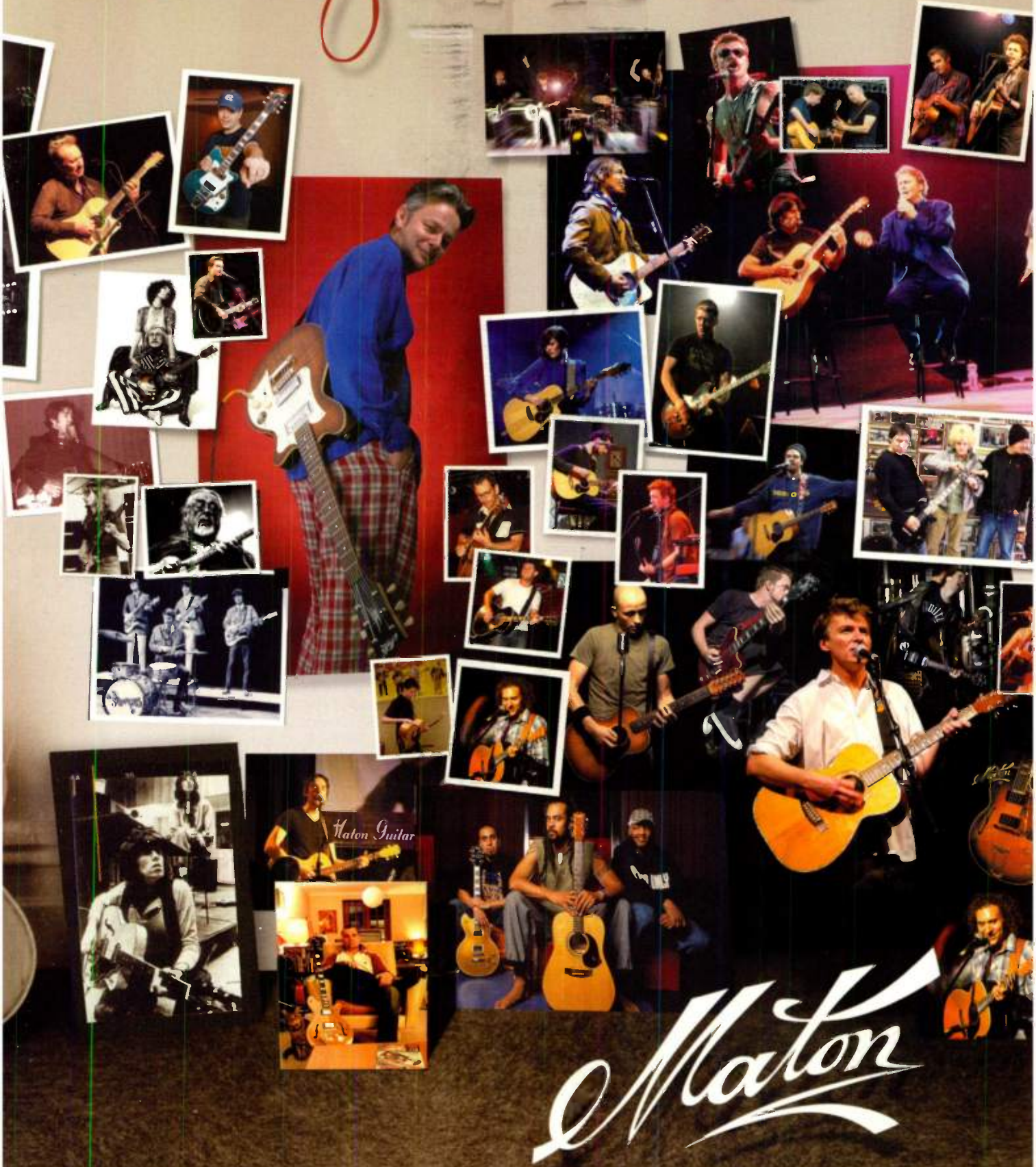
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TOTO

Their name is inextricably linked to the eighties, a musical period many believe should only be mentioned in hushed tones. However the degree of success American band Toto achieved cannot be denied. They had an incredible string of hits, particularly between 1982 and 83. Tunes like "Africa", "Rosanna" and "Hold the Line", can still be heard regularly on radio today. The thing that separated Toto from their peers was their musical pedigree. They always were, and remain ... a musician's band. Recently Australian audiences were fortunate to see the band in as close as possible to it's original incarnation featuring vocalist Bobby Kimball, the voice heard on all of those memorable hits. It was hardly surprising to see a large proportion of muso-types in the crowd. One of them was longtime Toto fan and talented local guitarist MARCEL YAMMOUNI. Marcel got to sit down with virtuosos STEVE LUKATHER (guitar) , SIMON PHILLIPS (drums) and GREG PHILLINGANES (keyboards) and chose not to labour on the past but opted to discuss the recording of their new album 'Falling In Between'. He began by asking Simon Phillips about his new studio where the band recorded the album.

SP: I took over the lease of an existing studio. I took it over from Sheila E who had it for three years and it was in need of some renovation. My studio was previously at my house so I had all the equipment. I rewired the studio to my specs and more or less started from scratch. It's kind of an old fashioned studio in the vibe of a late 70s, early 80s styled studio, especially the playing room. Whoever designed it, did it well. It's not like a modern room where there's lots of angles, but for four or five guys to play in there at a decent volume it's really good.

What about sound separation issues?

SP: Well you know I'm an old fashioned engineer, a bit of mic spill is not such a problem as people think it is. The guys actually hadn't even seen the room, yet really it was just a lot of faith. They'd been to my house and recorded there. We'd done a few projects there, so they thought I guess it's going to be OK. They all turned up for the first time and I think that they were totally surprised with it all.

SL: Yeah Simon is one of the finest engineers I've ever worked with, forget about the musicianship for a minute. I mean he loves the process and does the homework and is willing to try new things. I mean he has a real passion for it. I mean I speak the speak, but he walks the walk. To have a band member control the sound ... I mean, it's supposed to sound like there's a lot less talking than would go on with an outside engineer. Simon knows what my stuff is supposed to sound like. I can't think of a time where he hasn't got it, he's always experimenting with new mics and sounds and I completely trust him.

SP: You know if you're looking for something, you have to make a few mistakes to get there. If you want to do something a little bit different, you try and you listen to it and say you know what ... I really don't think this is working and we'll go back to square one.

SL: Sometimes it may not be the sound, it may just be the part. If it's the wrong part, it doesn't matter what you do to it, it's not gonna sound right. That happens more often than a sonic problem and occasionally things fly off the top so quickly where we didn't really hone in on the sound, but we got a great performance and you gotta live with that as well.

SP: I think really the basis for this album once everybody came in and set up, was ... I got sounds on everybody and really, it was a classical old fashioned technique of recording. If everybody has got great sounding instruments, that's where it starts and it enabled us to start writing in the studio.

So how long did the album take to do?

SL: Ten months!

SP: The mixing itself took up two months, but the actual backing tracks and writing was about three weeks

SL: Oh the initial writing was right away but it took most of the time to write the lyrics, do the vocals, organise the special guests.

So how do you engineer a recording from the drum kit?

SL: That's funny actually because he does have a remote at the kit

SP: Yeah actually I do, but for this record I had an assistant as I wanted to relinquish that. There are a few technical issues in trying to do both. When I play drums, I just want to be the musician. My assistant will operate Pro Tools while I'm at the kit, but after that I usually walk back into the control room ... maybe do some edits and check everything out. Once we get into overdubbing, I'll usually take over. Especially if we're working on a solo. Luke and I have worked together a lot over the years and do so at a really good pace.

SL: Yeah, there's usually no one around and he knows what an impatient @%# I am (laughs). He's the patient one. I'm the impatient one, but he always gets a great performance out of me. He'll say 'Come on man, this isn't working' and I'll say 'Oh really,' then I'll actually play something good.

GP: Producing is all psychology and you have to understand the personalities that you're dealing with. Simon knows about Luke's personality which is different to mine and Dave's or Bobby's and so on.

So you're constantly adapting all the time?

SP: Oh totally. For example, at the beginning of the day we may do a vocal with Bobby and usually that would be myself and Dave at the helm. Dave is absolutely brilliant with vocals. From my point of view as an engineer he really knows how to read a song and get the best vocal performance.

SL: Yeah I've been doing this with Dave since 1977. I feel very comfortable with him even though he pisses me off sometimes.

A full transcript of the interview will appear on www.australianmusician.com.au and also Marcel's website: www.myspace.com/marcelymmouni

'Falling In Between' is out now on the Frontiers label through Riot Distribution Australia.





Pix by Marty Williams



World Radio History

GETTING THERE!

by Christopher King

Christopher King begins a new series looking at the ways in which a new band can get somewhere with their music. In each edition Chris will speak with key industry figures to find answers to the questions that many of you are asking. First up, Chris looks at getting that first gig.

Getting from Garage to Gig

Let's assume that you are satisfied with the development of your guitar hero stance and have somehow stumbled on a couple of like minded accomplices, one of whom had access to a draft ridden garage with no natural light, a dodgy roller door and a multi point socket which proved perfect for rehearsals. In rock n'roll mythology, this is familiar territory. Less familiar is where you head to once the roller door is lifted. Christopher King spoke to Brad Murray, band booker from the Rob Roy Hotel in Melbourne, Meredith Webb, who books for Sydney's Annandale Hotel and Scotty McKenzie from Australia's biggest band agency Premier Artists, to get some tips on how to pull your first gig.

SCOTT MCKENZIE-THE AGENT

CK: If an unknown band sends you a recording, will you listen to it?

SMcK: We get so many CDs that it's insane. But we do genuinely try and we tell them it takes us a month to get through them. If we're interested, we give the artist a call back and hook up a meeting or a time to see them play live or if they don't yet have a gig, we'll try and slot them into a show so we can check them out.

What do you expect from a band?

They need to be available and able to do things at the drop of a hat. They have to be really committed to the band. They virtually have to view it as their job otherwise it's going to make me as a booking agent less likely to want to deal with them. Of course you've got to be able to pay your rent so a lot of bands have casual or at least flexible employment.

So you like a band... how hard is it to find them a gig?

If you want a gig, you can get one. Don't kid yourself it's hard work, but then again what isn't? You just have to be prepared to pound the pavement and be passionate about your music and show the venues that you're serious about it and you've got what it takes.

Should they push their own barrow?

Go nuts and promote the hell out of themselves. My job is to get them the best possible shows that I can and help them to get as many people as possible into the venue. I try to get them shows and introduce them to the industry and all my contacts within it. Put together shows, try and organize tours and get them on festivals. Most of the staple Melbourne venues like the Prince and the Espy will stick an unknown band on the lineup just to give them a shot..

Do they always get paid?

Every gig preferably should be a playing gig. Sometimes it might be a nominal fee just to try and cover the bands costs. The exception being a charity gig or where there is an amazing line up (You Am I, Casanovas) with no more money available. You would be prepared to slot into the lineup as a support just for the exposure. It's about giving a band a good shot at getting up in front of an audience that the music may appeal to.

BRAD MURRAY-THE MELBOURNE PUB

CK: How should they approach you in regard to getting a gig?

BM: Submitting a demo is only a small part of getting a gig. Most young bands think that after they send in a demo, they are going to get support slots with touring bands, etc. It doesn't work that way. Once you have sent in a demo, the venue/booker knows who you are. You have to then network with bands and organise bills/lineups yourself. Most shows booked are organized by the bands, not the venue. If an unknown band emails or calls out of the blue, a response is unlikely. Young bands need to understand that my job as the venue's promoter is to a) get people into the venue and b) book the right type of bands

that will ensure future interest in the venue. I think new bands can forget that small live music venues are usually always pubs, and these pubs aren't putting on live music to "support the scene," they are putting on live music as a way of getting people to the pub.

How important is an agent or manager ?

You don't need a booking agent or manager, but obviously a good agent or manager is invaluable. It is a good idea to nominate one member of your band to act as "the manager", i.e. book all the shows, etc. It can be confusing when different members of a band are telling me different stories.

On what basis are fees worked out?

Most shows are paid from a "door deal". I send out a worksheet, that must be signed by the artist and returned to me. It is better for a band to have an ABN. Without an ABN, we must pay the GST on the artist's behalf. If you are a new band, chances are you won't need to register for GST.

What do they need to bring?

The venue supplies in-house production. This means we supply the sound system, DI's, mic's, leads and stands. The performer must supply their own engineer (except for arvo shows).

What do they need to know about the power supply?

There is no 3 Phase Power at the Rob Roy. If any outlet is overloaded, the corresponding circuit cuts out. The system is thoroughly checked weekly, it is up to the performer to ensure that their equipment is not faulty. The cost of any damage caused by the performer will come out of their payment on the night; same rule applies for any stolen or missing equipment.

Do they need insurance?

All pubs should have public liability insurance for its staff and patrons. If an audience member is injured, they are covered. It gets a bit tricky with bands, if a band is a registered business, i.e. has an ABN, then technically that said business, should have its own liability insurance.

What pulls the crowd?

Bands get people to the venue, which is why we book bands to play. Just because you have a gig at a good venue, doesn't mean people are "just gonna turn up". That will NEVER happen, it is up to the band to get their friends along. To be blunt, the mythical "Walk-in crowd" just doesn't exist.

What does it take to get invited back for another Gig?

Generally, the "3 gig" rule applies to all bands - all your friends will come to your first show (even if they don't like it, they want to support you), some of your friends will come to your second show, and then, 99% of the time, none of your friends will come to your third show, and then you are on your own. If a band makes no effort to promote and brings no-one, then they won't get another gig. This is a harsh reality, but the venue is a business.

How many bands do you book a year?

Each gig usually has a minimum 3 bands, sometimes more. Which means, I book a minimum 750 bands in any one year. We have a Sunday arvo session which is aimed at new bands, its called Sunday Mass – every Sunday arvo, 4 new bands play a 30 minute set. If any of these bands are amazing and pull a big crowd, they will most likely get another shot, and if they do extremely well, I may even give them an opening support slot.

MEREDITH WEBB-THE SYDNEY PUB

CK: How should they approach you in regard to getting a gig?

MW: The best approach would be to send an email (PLEASE don't call! I get 475385635 calls a day, and am much more likely to respond to an email!) with a song sample and/or website/MP3 link, a bio, and the answers to these 3 very important questions:
WHERE HAVE YOU PLAYED BEFORE?
WHO WITH?
HOW MANY PUNTERS DO YOU BRING WITH YOU (on average)?

Is it in a band's best interest to have a booking agent or manager when dealing with you or does it make little difference? If not, should they have one designated spokesperson with whom you deal with?

They should definitely have one designated booker/spokesperson, but please make sure that the booker and the band agree! Managers/bookers can have a habit of being pushy or arrogant and making the band look bad, or making it hard to deal with them. The person needs to be direct, organized and know exactly what the band wants in terms of their career as a live act.

What is provided in way of technical assistance?

We provide all production specifications in advance, and a house technician on the night to do the sound for all acts and help set up, etc. He is the boss - Never forget this!

Are artists encouraged to self promote? Put up posters etc. Can they decorate using banners etc when they play or is that discouraged?

Promote away – PLEEEASE! Most bands do not do this and I can never figure out why. If you want to be a successful outfit you must "sell your product" (for want of a better term). Whenever you play get every person you know to come, and inform every type of musical media possible! I have a check list guide that I send to every new band that I book – it is very useful.

What does it take to get invited back for another gig?

To get another gig you have to be good – first and foremost – and you must bring a decent amount of people (usually 30-40 heads, depending on the size of the venue). If they are really crap, they do not come back – period. And also, if they are fantastic but don't bother to promote themselves and bring no-one, they do not get asked back either. You have to believe in yourselves before we can!

Any final tips?

All I have to say is...use myspace.com. It is extremely beneficial to you and me both. It costs nothing – it makes you easy for me and others to find and listen to you – it gets you a wider fan base – USE IT!

Christopher King returns next edition with more handy hints for your band. If there are any topics you'd specifically like covered, email the mag on: mediaville@netspace.net.au



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The

GIGGING MUSICIAN

with **Joe Matera**



TO BE OR NOT TO BE!

How many times have you watched a live band who you thought were great musically, but lacked any sort of stage presence? If you're on a stage performing with your band or as an artist in your own right, the moment you hit the stage you are no longer just a musician, you are now also a performer. Playing songs, whether original or covers, that you've spent countless hours rehearsing to perfection is only part of the process involved in your career as a full blown gigging musician. As Robbie Williams puts it, whenever you take to the stage the case becomes ... "let me entertain you".

No matter how good your musicianship, punters and concert goers are not interested in simply watching a musical mannequin. They have come to see a show too, which obliges you to have some stage presence. All of the most successful performers in music history, from jazz to rock to metal, have had some sort of stage demeanour. And some have had it more than others! For example, Freddie Mercury and Bon Scott weren't just singers, they were showmen and entertaining manifestos. Their charismatic spirit permeated every part of their live performances. They made you feel you were a part of the show and the overall music quality was heightened beyond the realm of its sonics. It's this special inherent quality that can turn an average gig into one that is memorable.

When it comes down to it, for better or worse, the music industry is part of the entertainment industry, an industry where "putting on a show" is the key. Your showmanship tells your audience that you want to give them a good time and that you want them to participate actively, and that you are willing to play for them. If you want to simply play for yourself, then stay in your bedroom. Bands with "stage charisma" will tend to stand out in your mind longer than the ones that simply emphasise their music. While I'm not in any way advocating that performing should take priority over the quality of music, I do believe there needs to be a healthy balance between both, with a healthy dose of the former at its core. And a perfect example to illustrate my point would be Kiss.

They didn't earn their reputation as one of the greatest live acts ever by simply belting out their tunes. They turned their shows into a musical event. All band members are animated onstage, they interact between themselves and their audiences and they utilise props like pyrotechnics to further underscore their "entertainment" value... all without sacrificing the music. Their perfect blend of music and theatre makes for one hell of a great show. Personally, I'll take a band who has a "live show" any day over one that simply stays onstage showgazing during the entire performance.



The Posies' Ken Stringfellow

"When I perform, I am trying to join the audience—my position as focal point of the evening makes this an impossible task, but that's my goal. And to do this, I must coax the audience to envelop me" says The Posies' Ken Stringfellow when I quizzed him on his thoughts to this edition's topic." There's nothing more pure than air you move yourself, customizing each oscillation and presenting it as a handcrafted item for each listener. And I have a few showbiz parlour tricks I use to make each show go in the direction that's most comfortable for me".

I've always been highly animated onstage, a big part of that is due to growing up with a lot of the classic bands such as the aforementioned Kiss, where not only the music was the driving force but also the performance. It was usually a band's show that left the lasting impression on me. I've seen many bands play over the years, some are so perfect musically, that they lack any sense of spirit or life. I can easily

name my top gigs of all time simply because those gigs were the ones that oozed with the most personality and "show". The others remaining a distant memory to me, their music, the only fragment left upon my consciousness.

I do believe that every musician needs to spend some time nurturing their natural personas. This doesn't mean you have to start incorporating choreographed moves or pyrotechnics into your performance, but it does mean you need to harness that one ingredient that raises the bar for you when it comes to performing on stage. Good luck. Until next time take care and keep rockin'...

Readers are welcome to offer suggestions or topics they wish this column to explore in future by sending an email to: joe_matera@bigpond.com

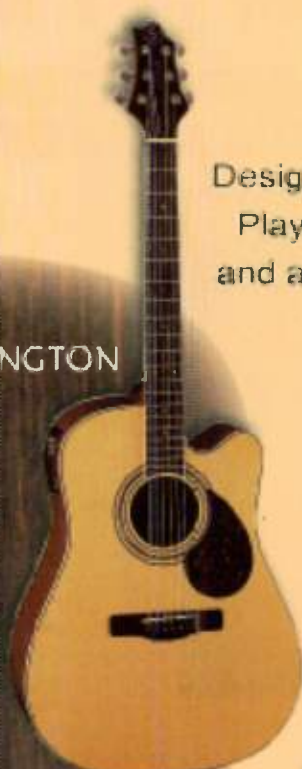
Joe Matera plays guitar for popular Melbourne covers band Double Vision. For further info go to his website: www.joematera.com

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GEAR

THE LEGEND RETURNS - HAGSTROM IS BACK



Remember Swedish based guitar brand Hagstrom from the seventies? ABBA used a Hagstrom acoustic in 'Mama Mia', Bowie used a 12 string Hagstrom in 'Space Oddity'. Cat Stevens used them and Frank Zappa liked them so much, he even featured in Hagstrom magazine ads, such was the credibility of these instruments. Today the Hagstrom name is still held in high regard with players like Ben Curtis from the ultra-cool New York band Secret Machines, and Former Foo Fighter and Nirvana guitarist Pat Smear being huge fans of the nordic guitars.

One of the first new models to be imported into Australia for some time is the Super Swede featuring

a mahogany body with carved maple top and set mahogany neck. It also includes the innovative Hagstrom H-Expander Truss Rod (as do all of the guitars in the range), which provides tension at either end of the neck, running the entire length allowing for a very low action. Combine this with the guitar's slick thin neck, and it's no surprise it has the reputation as the 'Fastest Neck on the Planet'. The Super Swede which includes 2x Hagstrom custom 58 Humbuckers, coil tap switch and 3 way toggle, retails in Australia at \$1,295.

For more information on Hagstrom guitars email sales@austmusic.com.au

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Check out www.ashtonmusic.com for all Ashton products.



iAXE393 USB GUITAR

Here's something new in the affordable price bracket (\$199.99 rrp). Now in Australia is the new iAXE393 USB guitar from Behringer. For young guitarists looking for an instrument with great variation, the iAXE will blow you away. Plug this amazing USB-guitar straight into your computer and turn your PC or Mac

computer into a guitar amp and recording system without the need for any other hardware. It is powered via USB so there is no power supply required. Naturally, the guitar can also be used with any traditional guitar amplifier. You get a great value electric guitar featuring a 22-fret maple neck, solid body, chrome machine heads, 3 single-coil pickups, 5-way switching and vintage vibrato bridge. Enjoy immediate access to "Guitar Combos" from Native Instruments—the No.1 authentic guitar amp and stomp box modeling software, as well as Kristal 16-track music production and Audacity® editing software.

It is very well packaged, and comes with CD, USB cable, adjustable guitar strap and 3 picks.

www.behringer.com



JAMES MORRISON PRAISES EPOCH VIOLINS

From the day James Morrison saw the legendary Stephane Grappelli play jazz violin, he has been on an odyssey to reproduce that sound within the context of his James Morrison Quintet. It had been a failed mission, until Australian violinist Ian Cooper turned up at a rehearsal a couple of years ago, with a brightly coloured, Australian made instrument called an Epoch tucked under his arm.

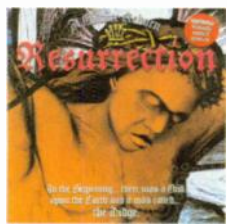
"Wait till you hear this," he told James. Morrison said that with the first notes, he knew instantly that he had found the sound he wanted for his band. This was no straining traditional violin coping with the indignity of amplification, but a confident, full bodied violin, designed for electrification, which maintained its sweetness, whatever the volume.

"Traditional acoustic violins, no matter how well they are fitted with pick-ups, have real limitations in a big gig. They might give you power, but the great tone they demonstrated as an acoustic, dissipates under amplification," explained James. "The first time Ian played the Epoch with its built-in electronics, I could tell the difference. It was a fine sound...the sound I'd almost despaired of finding from a real violin. Ordinary violins lose frequency and their sound gets thinner when amplified. Not only is it a great sound, but its nature actually suits jazz far better than a traditional instrument," said Morrison.

For more information on Epoch violins, visit www.epochstrings.com.au



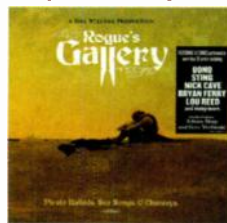
RESURRECTION-Various (Indigenous Australia)



Resurrection is an eleven track compilation of remixes by Dimi Palamidis of previously released indigenous music by artists such as David Hudson, Ash Dargan, Mark Mannock and Nigel Pegrum. In

this cultural clash of dreamtime, dance floor and cafe chill, Palamidis takes a collection of musically disparate Koori compositions and weaves them together into a continuous ambient electronic journey for the mind. Rather than detract from the spiritual essence of the originals, the remixes actually heighten the sense of earth, space and timelessness. New Age swirls fuse with funky beats and primitive vox to create an enchanting aural experience. Pure out of body escapism for our urban entrenched souls.

ROGUES GALLERY: Pirate Ballads, Sea Songs & Chanteys-Various (Shock) 2 CD set.



The collection of artists is extraordinary (Nick Cave, Richard Thompson, Bryan Ferry, Sting, Bono, Lou Reed, Antony, Rufus Wainright to name a few). The concept is bizarre (Inspired by the

latest Pirates of the Caribbean movie, yes they really do perform pirate tunes and sea chanteys). The result is an acquired taste, appealing to those with a folk and celtic bent, and a dark one at that. All the famous jolly jigs are here including Drunken Sailor and a full unedited Good Ship Venus. For artists such as Richard Thompson, Martin Carthy and Loudon Wainright the material is familiar fare, whereas the likes of Jarvis Cocker, Ed Harcourt and Bryan Ferry are sailing in uncharted waters. Compilations such as this one may not appeal to a mass audience, but

kudos must go to the producers for pushing the artistic boundaries and challenging artists to work outside their comfort zones.



SUNSHINE TO RAIN- Dragon (Liberation)

There's no denying Todd Hunter, bass player and songwriter for NZ greats Dragon was an integral part of that band. However, on Liberation's latest

addition to their fine Acoustic Blue Series "Sunshine to Rain", with Todd remaining as the only original member, the recording of these 16 Dragon classics almost qualifies as a cover album. Seasoned session vocalist Mark Williams is no slouch as a front man, but his voice has no real similarity to Marc Hunters. Once you get your head around that, you can then begin to enjoy the songs. Make no mistake this is a celebration of an incredible catalogue of material including "Sunshine", "April Sun in Cuba", "Are You Old Enough" and many other Dragon favourites played with passion and a commitment to the project, but if you're also expecting the authentic Dragon sound, then perhaps the back catalogue is for you. Also released in the new series are acoustic based albums by Jenny Morris, Choirboys and Michael Spity.

FOLK OFF (New Folk and Psychedelia from the British Isles and North America)- Various (Shock) 2 disc set



Call them folkies if you wish, although most of the artists featured on this compilation bear little musical resemblance to the Dylans, Donovans, Baez and Seegers of the past. What this new wave of songwriter/

performers do have in common is their ability to convey a story. Whereas their predecessors were armed predominantly with an acoustic guitar to tell their tales, the new breed has access to technology and use it imaginatively. British Isles artists (including This Is The Kit, Vashti Bunyan, Jakokoyak) inhabit disc one and disc two is dedicated to North American performers (such as Micah P Hinson, Richard Swift, Jack Lewis). Surprisingly, with 29 tracks featured there's hardly a hint of filler. Organic acoustic rawness sits comfortably next to tracks of inventive technology-created ambience. The stronger material falls on disc one, however the North American counterparts are no less interesting. An impressive collection from an increasingly admired genre.

HOWLING BELLS (Liberation)



They farewelled us as pleasure-seeking popsters Waikiki and re-emerge as goth flavoured alt rockers Howling Bells. Critics in the UK are falling over themselves to laud the Bells' debut self titled

album, and it's not difficult to see why. Deconstructed, the foundations of these dozen swirling originals are sturdy but sparse, it's the band's use of design and fabric that dresses them up a treat. Songs meander and build gradually, eventually cascading down the other side in a wash of echo laden slide, lush keyboard swirls, and oh so complimentary guitar jangles. Instrumentation is used sparingly and intelligently with the drums, for a rock band, used quite unobtrusively. However it's Juanita Stein's sensual vocals, where merely a carefully chosen inflection or sudden dropped key transports you to an otherworldly place. The Howling Bells are about space and ambience, romanticism and emotion. One of the strongest releases of the year.

DVD

JIM CONWAY'S BIG WHEEL "LIVE AT THE BASEMENT" (Warner)



"For a mouth organ player, I'm doing bloody well I think," says Australian blues icon Jim Conway in one of the interview segments on his newly released DVD 'Live At the Basement'. The context in which Jim seems to be speaking, is of him being wheelchair-bound, playing a normally inconspicuous instrument, yet still having the opportunity to lead and direct a band of amazing musicians. What the former Foreday Riders and Backsliders member fails to mention is that he is one of the world's greatest blues harp players, and one of most respected people in Australian music. Jim Conway and his 6 piece band Big Wheel is

captured here spreading a little blues and swing magic to an enthusiastic Sydney crowd. Tracks include tunes by T Bone Burnett, Merle Travis, Kenny Burrell and a couple of originals by Big Wheel member Don Hopkins. More than anything though, this almost hour long concert shows a true gentleman of music sharing his passion, not only with those on stage, but with the like minded souls lapping it all up in the audience.

LET'S ROCK-JOE STRUMMER (Warner)



When film maker and long time friend Dick Rude set out to make a documentary of Joe Strummer and The Mescaleros on a world wide tour, he didn't know he'd be capturing the last period of the ex Clash singer's life. In 'Let's Rock', Strummer is seen as an honest hard working musician intent on rebuilding his once mighty musical career. While the Mescaleros had a devoted following, there was never enough of them for their discs to recoup costs. Despite this, Strummer is seen as no less generous with his time for fans. Rude sets the scene with archival Clash footage, highlighting their astounding achievements, before taking us on the road with the Mescaleros. Apart from being a fitting tribute to a true punk rock legend, the footage shows a damn fine band in action. Extras include interviews with Strummer, behind the scenes footage, a Strummer slide show and a Q&A with the director.

WAYNE JONES



After decades of recording and touring with such greats as Ian Moss, Kate Ceberano and many others, Australian bassist extraordinaire Wayne Jones finally decided the time was right to record his own album. Jones had always written while working as a freelance player and has now decided to concentrate on his own material. It seems a wise choice too, when you hear his smooth, funky slap bass lines morph into fluid runs as he effortlessly reels out skillfully woven melodic lines throughout his debut solo album, 'Forgotten Melody'. James O'Toole reports

"It was a culmination of years of experience really. I got sick of being a hired gun going round and round the block working for other people. It was boring. I've done a lot of work, played covers but always written and I wanted to finally put it all to use."

The bass sound Wayne gets on the album is nothing short of sensational. His bass sounds smooth and powerful, with superb clarity and tone. This is due in no small part to his choice of bass, a six string Status Empathy.

"It's a graphite neck all the way through, all the way to the bridge, with rosewood and the hardwood of the body laminated to it. The graphite gives you sustain and evenness all the way up the neck and the wood gives you the warmth. It's too clean for some people; it's not forgiving at all! I used it on every track except An Evening In Paris... I used a Maton MGB 4 fretless on that one."

Wayne played through his own highly rated Wayne Jones 2 x 10" bass cabinets, hooked up to an Avalon preamp and Mackie power amp. Steve Scanlon invited Wayne to come to his studio in tropical Queensland to record the album and also funded the recording. The album was recorded over a six week period and Wayne assembled a group of talented musicians he knew would deliver the right accompaniment for the project, all of whom he'd previously worked with - Ash Crick on keyboards, Gerry Pantazis on drums, Ron Peers on guitar and James Sandon on sax. Before recording Wayne created a demo in Cubase.

"First I set myself a drum loop, then played the bass grooves on one track, the chords on the bass on another track, then the melody on another track and solo on another, all on bass. Then I handed it out to everyone and said there you are, do your thing with it."

The finished result is indeed impressive. The playing is inspired and the production is immaculate, comfortably sitting alongside any international release you'd care to mention and Wayne is looking forward to promoting the album.

"I couldn't be happier with the way it's turned out. I'm smiling all the way."

Forgotten Melody is already receiving airplay on radio stations including Melbourne's PBS and has also earned some very favourable feedback both here and abroad. The album is available now on Cre-8-Sound from ABC Shops and www.wayne-jones.com. Digital distribution by Apple itunes. You can also hear samples from the album at www.myspace.com/waynejonesbass.



DESCRIBE ELIZA



On their 2005 self titled release, Melbourne based band Describe Eliza displayed an affinity for eighties influenced electronica, a subtle jazz and blues sensibility and a blueprint for a solid foundation in sound and

style. On their recently released 3 track EP, the band has refined their sound and have emerged with a clear understanding of 2006 style pop. On track one, the single 'I Bet You Never', a laconic soulful vocal rides an infectious disco beat. The ambient bluesy 'Roll' follows, smouldering its way from start to finish ... late night mind soothing melancholia. 'Just Breathe' continues the sonic seduction in a Massive Attack/Portishead kind of way. The songwriting strength of Eliza Hull and beats programmer Jon Steer, combined with an ever growing grasp of studio machinations, will ensure Describe Eliza continue to produce quality sounds. Whether it's the band finding a much larger audience or the audience finding them is purely academic, there's a whiff of inevitability about it all. An album is due for release in early 2007.

www.describeeliza.com

SUADE



suade



Mention the words 'a capella group' and many a guitar-feedback lovin, slam-dancin' rock fan will run for the hills. American performer Ben Folds cleverly showed that he could even extract a decent four part harmony from a thousand or so disparate audience

members on a tour last year. So what's the big deal about singing sans band then? Well ponder this! What if the individual components of an a capella group all have amazing voices, a great ear for intricate harmonies, an obvious love and enjoyment of their craft and most importantly, are able to generate soul? This is exactly what happens on local five piece outfit Suade's newly released 13 track album 'All Singing, No Dancing'. Sure, the material they work with is familiar mainstream a capella fare, but creative arrangements and thoughtful inflections and countermelodies raise the bar well above the pedestrian flock. The quirky use of faux instrumentation and intricately textured vocal choreography make for a wistfully engaging journey. During the album's recording, baritone Loz Blain suffered a painful battle with cancer. His illness and treatment made the work of production and performing a difficult task. Thankfully Blain is now in full remission.

www.suade.net

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electronic vanguard



with **Baz Barde**

For this issue I have chosen to interview talented local musician, producer and label manager Damiano Verna. But before I get to that, I wanted to comment on the iPod phenomena. Legendary guitarist for the Who Pete Townsend attributes his hearing loss over the years to the extensive time he has spent in the studio with headphones on. I've been reading a bit about this and apparently the surest way to damage your ears is to enclose them, then drive sound straight into the ear drums. I have been noticing how many people seem to spend their time with ear plugs, especially teenagers....it's kind of a fashion thing and especially chilling to anyone who has read Ray Bradbury's 'Fahrenheit 451' I would have thought. Reinforcing such behaviour are advertisements like the one I saw recently where a family group is eating a meal and the young 'daughter' is immersed in music via her ear plugs! Sure it's cool and we can't do without our music, but I wonder how much long term damage is being done by getting such a regular mp3 fix? There have been a number of articles about it and I can't help thinking it will become a real issue. My view has always been that if you want to listen to music create the time and space to appreciate it properly.

Locally based success story Damiano Verna not only runs Tempest Recordings, who now have a global distribution deal, but he is an accomplished musician and producer in his own right. I asked him to explain the style of music he does with his act Red Eye Express, and how he arrived at it.

"Red Eye Express is guitar driven electronic music. Chris, Giorgio and I all started in traditional rock bands. Chris and I played together as drummer and bassist respectively, although Chris eventually abandoned drums in order to concentrate on synths and technology, I never quite quit being a bassist.

Giorgio has played in many rock bands as guitarist, keyboardist and singer. Chris and I had spent many years working on predominantly electronic music with projects like Arcane Trickster, The Omm Squad and various others, releasing dance music and we had an urge to return to our roots, but maintain the freedoms of having an electronic format.

Red Eye Express is the result of this and its predominantly chilled out, having a world music and psychedelic influence. The songs are predominantly worked whilst jamming on guitars, generally the drum machine and electronics are added later, so its written more like how you write rock music".

Verna's favourite production tool is undoubtedly Pro Tools which is the centre piece of his setup. He is constantly recording all jams and rehearsals and unlike most electronic based acts who spend all their time at the computer, he prefers to make these more spontaneous jams the basis of tracks. At the mastering stage Simon Polinski's talents are a vital part of the sound. Although in the early stages of their career Red Eye Express have a number of tracks released not only on their own label but also Greek imprint Cosmic Leaf, German label Yellow Sunshine Explosion and French label Cinetiks. They plan a debut release for some time in 2007.

Verna is now very much a bassist as well as being a synth player and a programmer. He wound up playing bass as a kind of default when a band decided it needed bass more than synth. His interest in the instrument was only compounded by realising that all those little melodies on New Order's tunes were being done by Peter Hook's six



string! It was the start of a long 'love affair' with the instrument and forms the basis of Red Eye's slightly unusual approach to electronic music. With all members having a background in conventional instruments they tend to be very performance based.

"I mean the whole idea behind Red Eye Express is its a hybrid of different sensibilities, there is no room for a purist", Verna contends. With the machines 'only a means to an ends' Red Eye's first loyalty is to music, which makes for a refreshing change in a genre obsessed world. Verna's fave instrument is a Washburn 6 string, although he also uses Fender four strings and eschews using an amp in favour of DI's, a Korg G5 synth, and various stomp boxes and plug ins in the studio. For live work he would love to move towards a more 'band'

oriented approach but since most shows are in the dance music scene he has had to compromise a bit. Generally a live show involves him and Giorgio playing bass and guitar respectively and a laptop supplying the drum and synth parts. Having to setup and play around DJ's with no interruption to the music is a 'frustration' and has created an imperative to make the live rig very portable and flexible. Further down the track he aims to add musicians.

I finished by asking him if he had any thoughts or advice for new producers of electronic based music?

"Work hard on your music, but work harder on networking and surrounding yourself with people you can trust!"

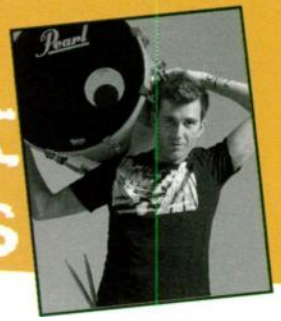
It looks like this philosophy is finally paying off. It is one thing to have some great music but Verna and Tempest have created a strong network to have it released globally.

www.tempestrecordings.com

And finally I have to give this a little plug again....Oka's 'Music Makes Me Happy' does so indeed! I struggle to think of a time when an album seemed so perfect - check it out!

Send all news to : sunsaria@hotmail.com

DRUMS with Grant Collins



Samba - Part 2

In this lesson I'm going to look at ways in which we can use a sticking pattern as a platform for grooves, fills and improvisation. The object is to master the sticking pattern so that you can play it in a variety of ways using dynamics and orchestration. I'm going to use a basic sticking pattern from the South American rhythm of the Samba. this is an excellent example of how to expand upon a sticking pattern. The first object will be to learn the right-hand (or left for left hand lead):



Next up I've added a basic samba foot pattern to help lock in the time and to incorporate some coordination:



Now we will add the left-hand so that there is a complete flow of 8th notes. The left simply fills in the breaks that were left by the main rhythm in the previous exercises:



With a little orchestration, this turns into an exciting traditional sounding Brazilian Samba. The left hand will play rim-clicks on the snare, while the right-hand will move between the snare and the floor tom:



For another variation of the groove, the following exercise makes use of the right-hand rhythm of the samba on the ride cymbal (or cowbell). The rhythm of the left-hand is different from the previous exercise as it represents the conga part and plays between a rim-click on the snare and the high tom:

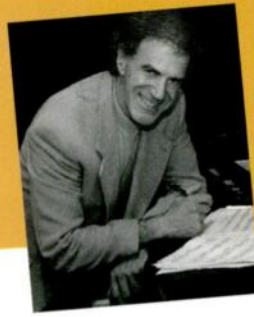


Get the sticking and grooves so that you're 100% comfortable and in control. In the next lesson, we will start to look at ways to use the sticking combined with different dynamics. Enjoy and catch you next time ... Grant

Grant is a professional performing artist who has built a reputation as being a leader in his field and a pioneer of new techniques. His success in Australia is easily documented by the thousands which have attended his solo performances. He has also been very successful on the international scene, having completed several solo tours of Asia and most recently a series of highly successful solo performances in the United States. Website: www.grantcollins.com Grant's lesson was created using Sibelius 4 scoring software

KEYBOARD

with Allan Zavod



Scales ... What Good Are They?

Some think scales are booooring. I have never, well hardly ever, felt that way about scales. Think about it: some ingenious fellow humans invent a symmetrically perfect piano keyboard for other humans to use their fingers upon in a way that can only be described as a miracle.

Am I getting through to anybody here? Scales within themselves are an extraordinary invention. A scale is an ordered table of musical notes played in succession which can usually be repeated at octave distances. In other words a scale is normally a series of notes played in a successive order that can be repeated at the next octave, then the next, and so on.

Scales may consist of two or more notes. Eg: five note scales better known as Pentatonic scales are very commonly used in jazz and in a big way by French impressionist composers like Debussy and Ravel.

Most of us are familiar with the traditional seven note major and minor scales as well as the modes (eight notes if you include the last note, which has the same name as the starting note of the scale but at the next octave above or below depending on whether you are ascending or descending). The eleven note chromatic scale (twelve if you include the note of the same name at the next octave above or below depending on whether you are ascending or descending), is another scale familiar to us all.

Perhaps more known to the jazz players and less to the classical performers is the eight note diminished symmetrical scale (nine if you include the note having the same name an octave above or below depending on whether you are ascending or descending).

There are also jazz scales applied to major 7th and minor 7th chords, as well as minor 7th, flat 5 and various dominant 7th and diminished 7th chords.

Scales in the jazz world could be described as table of available notes used in a particular chord. Then there are composite scales, which the composer and/or performer invents him/herself.

Let's not forget the eastern scales, (eg Arabic) and Indian 1/4 tones scales, and on and on it goes.

Scales are an invaluable asset for all instrumentalists and composers for so many reasons of which I will name a few:

- A) Finger dexterity, ie finger independence, using thumb and hand preparation for proper scale execution (more of that in a moment).
 - B) Hand independence
 - C) Presents us with an organised method of leaning note names, key signatures and intervals.
 - D) Development of controlled even and controlled uneven playing
 - E) Compositional tools for both classical and jazz composers
- SEE EXAMPLE 1

I will now detail some of the above points. Firstly, finger dexterity through thumb and hand preparation. Lets take a major scale for both hands and study the fingering.

EX 1. C MAJOR SCALE

Right Hand

Left Hand

In this scale of C major for two octaves it is important for the right hand going up and the left hand going down to keep the thumb under and ready in position over the next note it is going to play, at least as near as possible towards and/or over the note it will be playing.

So practice the scale slowly but moving the thumb under as quickly as possible being careful not to create an unevenness to the sound.

Finger independence or clean technique, where notes are clear at any tempo fast or slow, is achieved on the piano by the releasing as well as the playing of notes.

Think of scales as a mosaic. A good clear mosaic has a much sharper image at a distance when every individual chip has been attended to independently. Each chip is like each note of a scale. Up close where you can see every chip is like listening to a scale played slowly with attention to every note. Stepping further away from the picture to experience a sharper and cleaner image is like playing scales with more speed. If every note has been attended to, the music will be crisp and clear.

Right hand going down and left hand going up uses 'hand preparation' where the hand crosses over the thumb as quickly as possible in position for the next group of notes to be played. Again be careful not to disrupt evenness in the sound.

In reference to point B, 'hand independence', I am referring to playing scales on piano with both hands simultaneously. For those without much experience, you will be surprised how quickly this can be achieved.

To expand on point C, the chromatic scale contains every interval in a perfectly ordered symmetrical format. Starting on the note C, the next note is Db a minor 2nd interval from the starting note C. The next note is D natural, a major 2nd interval from the starting note C and so on.

Point D refers to scales helping us develop controlled evenness as well as controlled unevenness. Try playing scales slowly and very quietly. You will soon realise the challenge of playing each and every note with the same amount of softness. Conversely the jazz player may wish to use scales for controlled unevenness whereby every 2nd note is accented, perhaps to create a swing.

SEE EXAMPLE 2

Finally on the last point, composition, scales are widely used. Jazz scales for example, are tables of available notes in chords and/or chord symbols. each note of a jazz scale has a number.

In EX 3 the dominant scale of 'G7 altered' gives every note that can be played or written for G7b13. Whether the scale is used when improvising (spontaneous composition) or written composition, such scales are valued tools for both the jazz performer and composer.

SEE EXAMPLE 3

Well I hope this has clarified any illusions that scales are boring and tedious. You had better write to me if you still think so!

EX. 2

EX. 3

G7^b13 (G7 altered scale)

NOW LISTEN UP: The 2006 Zavod Classical/Jazz Fusion Award, dedicated to the memory of Noel Castan is now open. If you are a tertiary music student...BE IN IT. See Melbourne University Faculty of Music website or my website for details and good luck. See you next time.

Allan Zavod: Bachelor of Music (Melbourne), Professor of Music (Berklee School of Music, Boston, USA) Website: www.allanzavod.com

BASS with George Urbaszek



Styles Part IV - The Blues Form

Although often referred to as a feeling or an emotional state of sadness and feeling down, the blues can also be uplifting and happy. There is truth in the origins of the blues being a product of adversity; however nowadays (and for a long time already) the blues in music indicates a musical form.

You may already be familiar with the term "twelve-bar blues". A twelve-bar blues is a recurring harmonic cycle, i.e. the same chords occurring in the same place every twelve bars. There are blues forms of eight bars (Night Mist Blues), eleven bars (Folsom Prison Blues), sixteen bars (Basin Street Blues) and so on, however these are much less common than the twelve-bar blues. Therefore, when we decide to play a blues it will be a twelve-bar blues unless indicated otherwise.

Blues can be played at any tempo, from very slow to very fast, and in almost any genre with any feel and any style. It could be a Delta blues, a rock blues, a funk blues, a jazz blues, a punk blues, a country blues etc.

Many bass players believe that they are playing the blues when they play the first bass line or riff they ever learnt over the blues form. Not so - see above.

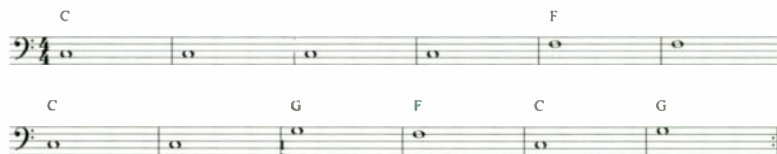
There are many good reasons to learn the blues form. Here are some:

1. The blues is the backbone of many contemporary music genres. The more you know about the blues, the more you will recognize its influence.
2. You learn to hear - and even anticipate - chord changes.
3. You learn about the function of certain chords.
4. You learn how to keep the twelve-bar form, which in turn will help you learn other forms.
5. Because the blues is a relatively short form, you can achieve a lot of learning (i.e. apply various concepts) in limited space and time.
6. The blues is often used for jamming and auditioning - very often - so the ability to play through the blues form comfortably could make or break your musical career prospects.

In this lesson and the next two, we will use the blues form as our harmonic framework and look at various applications that will ultimately extend way beyond the blues. But first you must learn the basic form.

The common twelve-bar blues uses chords built off the first, fourth and fifth notes of the major scale. We will use the C major scale as our starting point. It has the notes C D E F G A B (and C, the octave). It is a seven-note scale without accidentals (sharps or flats).

We will use the common time signature of 4/4 (four beats per bar). The notated example is a blues in C and uses only the root note of each chord: C, F and G. The root note of each chord is played on the first beat of each bar and sustained for the entire bar. Although apparently simple, make sure you understand and can play the following example perfectly many times over.



Here is one way of learning the "changes" (the chord sequence) of this particular blues form.

Memorize

- 4 bars of C
 - 2 bars of F
 - 2 bars of C
 - 1 bar of G
 - 1 bar of F
 - 1 bar of C
 - 1 bar of G
- End on C, the first bar of the next cycle.

Between now and the next lesson, your tasks are:

1. Play the same sequence at different tempos, from very slow to very fast
2. Play various rhythms and grooves over the 12-bar blues
3. Play multiple choruses (12-bar cycles) non-stop; this builds mental and physical endurance

In the next lesson you will learn how to remember the blues form forever.

Until then, be blue if it feels right.

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RIGHT HAND DEVELOPMENT

In this edition I thought I'd look at right hand development, or your picking hand (apologies to left handed players-you can always invert the info). of course, there are many players such as Jeff Beck and Mark Knopfler that play exclusively with their fingers, but here I'll assume that the majority rules-go pickers! I also acknowledge that many players have unique approaches when it comes to picking but this is intended as a general overview.

TYPES OF PICKS-As anyone who has been into a music shop will attest, there are always an abundance of picks to choose from. So how do they vary and what's right for you? Obviously picks come in many different shapes and levels of flexibility, so it's important that you decide upon what is comfortable for you and especially, the sound that they produce. Smaller picks, such as the jazz ones (favoured by players such as Eric Johnson) are great for articulation. They're often in the range of 2-3mm as well as being firm, you tend to get a lot of bounce off the string. This greater resistance enables you to play faster. This approach might well work for jazz and shred types of playing but if you're playing riff orientated rock or big open acoustic strumming, then the greater surface area of a large pick might work better. Thin picks can sound great on acoustics for a more 'papery' type of sound. Be sure to experiment with different styles of picks in order to find what works best for you physically and with your equipment in order to achieve the sound you're hearing.

Ex 1

Ex 2

Ex 3

Ex 4

HOLDING THE PICK-This is an area that is definitely subjective and personal. Eddie Van Halen holds the pick with his second finger, whilst Scott Henderson and Pat Metheny have quite unorthodox approaches. As a general rule, the conventional manner in which to hold the pick is as follows; extend your right hand fingers and thumb and position your hand so that your index finger and thumb touch. Now open your thumb and index finger and place the pick between them so that the tip of the pick is pointing down and at 90 degrees to your thumb. As another example of the variations, some players prefer the blunt end of the pick, as it gives them a darker, fuller sound due to the greater surface area. As an addition to holding the pick, how you position your hand when picking is also worth mentioning here. Some players pick with their fingers tucked in so that the pick is the only point of contact with the guitar, while the other approach is to extend some or all of your remaining right hand fingers and anchor them on either the pickguard or the face of the guitar.

DEVELOPING PICKING-Like every other facet of technique, it's best to isolate the various elements when practicing so that you can reach your full potential. How we all strike the strings varies from player to player, but as a sweeping generalisation, a strong positive attack usually produces the most tonal results. You can especially notice this when the top of an acoustic guitar is resonating.

When developing your picking, I've often recommended to students that they should set up a mirror so that they can see clearly what their picking hand is up to (Same could apply to your fingering hand). Providing your picking hand is relaxed, striving for definition while economising on the motion is a good goal to aim at. Also, in relation to relaxation, try not to grip the pick against your thumb for drum strokes and your index finger for up strokes should be enough to keep the pick in place and ensure accuracy and tone.


MECHANICS-The three basic concepts for picking revolve around down strokes, upstrokes and a combination known as alternate picking (consistent down followed by an upstroke). As an exercise, I'd recommend practicing scales and also any exercise or piece that employs large intervals (which usually involves string skipping on the guitar). Arpeggios and pentatonic scales are good here too. try practicing any passage or exercise with a metronome with all down strokes, then all up strokes and finally alternate picking.

I've listed examples 1 through 4 for you to use as exercises. Examples 1 and 2 are random patterns, while Exercise 3 is a G major scale. Example 4 is a G major 7 arpeggio.

TYPES OF PICKING- Other than alternate picking, here are some other picking concepts you might like to consider.

- **Directional Picking**-If you are ascending, each new string will start with a down stroke. Inversely, when descending, each new string begins with an upstroke.
- **Sweep Picking**-As used by Frank Gambale and many shredders, passages are played with either a continuous down or upstroke. Often employed with arpeggios.
- **Hybrid Picking**-Where pick and fingers are used together. Again, good for arpeggios.
- **Circular Picking**- Where the first joints of the thumb and the index finger move in a continuous circular motion. Used strictly for alternate picking. See Eric Johnson Total Guitar DVD for a demonstration and a half!


Happy picking!



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Australian Musician Spring 2006

CHECK 1.2

PRODUCT: IVAN RICHARDS RICH BLUES AND CLASS A EFFECTS PEDALS

REVIEWER: BOB SPENCER **DISTRIBUTOR:** IVAN RICHARDS info@ivanrichards.com

Both Ivan Richards Pedals reviewed here, the Class A Distortion and Rich Blues, arrive looking like a million bucks; the red of the Class A and the blue of the Rich Blues, as though they'd been recently borrowed from Split Enz's wardrobe. Fantastic! I don't recall seeing any other Aussie pedals presented this professionally, with a nod to the glory days of British rock, yet modern enough for those of us who enjoy craftsmen such as Mr Richards, moving forward in their efforts.

Both come replete with very detailed and user-friendly paperwork/manual and Ivan's 12 month warranty.

And I'm quite chuffed to see that Ivan has kept the blue on/off easy-to-see LED's that have been present on his pedals for a number of years, even though other manufacturers have recently jumped onboard.

Both pedals, as with all Richards pedals, are true bypass, using only the highest quality switches available. These will provide years of trouble-free operation.

CLASS A DISTORTION:

These days, one is faced with an array of distortion types; MosFET, diode, IC, transistor; all with their own characteristics and "must-have" "you'll never need another blah blah" latest raves.

This box uses discrete transistors in a Class A configuration, just as those prized (read: \$\$\$) 60's mic pre's did. This results in very smooth, second order harmonic, distortion, going into third order (or one might say more "harsh" and edgy) only when really pushed. Ivan has magically kept intermodulation distortion at bay, which means chords do not turn to incoherent mush. As one would rightly expect from a pedal of this pedigree, changes in the guitar's volume and tone, whether by the instrument's controls or by the player's hands, are generously reflected when presented to the amp.

The tone control is very wide-ranging, and should make most guitar players happy.

Although capable of moderate amounts of distortion, this is not the pedal for those looking for a "Big Muff" clone. (Another Richards pedal, the Rich Fuzz does that better than my vintage real Big Muff). I find this pedal works with an amp that ranges anywhere from dead clean to quite dirty. A very creamy, singing, smooth sound and very useful indeed.

IN MY OPINION, THIS IS THE PEDAL THAT THE 808-CLONE MAKERS AND 'MODIFIERS' SHOULD FEAR, AS IT RETAINS ALL OF THE GUITAR'S INHERENT "THRUST", DOES NOT TAKE AWAY THE TOPS AND THE BOTTOMS, AND RESULTS IN A BLOODY BIG GUITAR SOUND, WITH BEAUTIFUL GUITAR-FRIENDLY TREBLES LACKING ANY HARSHNESS.

THE RICH BLUES:

A very different animal from the Class A Distortion, this is the pedal of choice for some very discerning Australian and British players.

The tone control has quite a sweep to it and manages to give a wide range of useful settings. One can achieve a fair, but not over-the-top, amount of dirt. "Gruff" would be the word. It is very responsive & adds something so cool to a good valve amp.

If you require a pedal to deliver the kind of distortion that will make a dead-clean amp sound like a high-gain amp, or you wish to "fix" a



SPECS

- User friendly manual
- Easy to read LEDs
- Highest quality switches
- Sturdy construction

crappy amp, then this pedal is not the pedal for you (though the Class A may well be). As Ivan will gladly tell you, this application is not its forte, nor is it intended to be.

In my opinion, this is the pedal that the 808-clone makers and "modifiers" should fear, as it retains all of the guitar's inherent "thrust", does not take away the tops and the bottoms, and results in a bloody big guitar sound, with beautiful guitar-friendly trebles lacking any harshness.

Plugged into a good quality amp that is just into distortion, it's absolutely fantastic. Really.

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CHECK 1,2

PRODUCT: STU BOX GUITARS **REVIEWER:** BOB SPENCER

DISTRIBUTOR: BOX MUSICAL ENTERPRISES 03 5629 9478

A brief history is in order. Since 1986, and by far preceding any other guitars of this type, Melbourne's Stu Box has been building, selling and exporting one of the more interesting guitars that we've seen.

Keen guitar magazine junkies may remember the 'Jennifer Batten' edition of Guitar Player Magazine from July 1989 featuring Stu's invention.

Though Stu took out a patent on his guitar many years ago, the enormous cost of keeping it up proved prohibitive to his one-man hand-made Australian operation.

These guitars don't rely on out-board processing, such as MIDI triggering of other sounds, to set them apart (these may of course be added to any instrument) and, although in some ways resembling the Chapman Stick, I believe the instrument that Stu created differs enough to be rightfully given its own "space" in our history.

The ever affable Stu arrived at this reviewer's home armed with an arsenal of 12 string guitars. Each one of them beautifully crafted, finished and finely set-up. (And they smell great!!).

Though I am not a "tapping" kinda guy, I found Stu's enthusiasm, knowledge and obvious concern for what he does highly informative and even contagious.

He has used the past two decades to hone his craft, and this is reflected in his current instruments.

SINCE 1986, AND BY FAR PRECEDING ANY OTHER GUITARS OF THIS TYPE, MELBOURNE'S STU BOX HAS BEEN BUILDING, SELLING AND EXPORTING ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING GUITARS THAT WE'VE SEEN.

The Stu Box Guitars fall roughly into two categories: The first group have scale lengths approaching that of a "standard" guitar; being 640 mm (approx 25 1/4 ") and 648 mm, and used for tunings approaching what most of us use.

The other group have a scale length of either 860 mm or 890 mm, lending themselves to a variety of "low" tunings, or a combination of guitar and bass tunings.

Both groups have 24 frets. All have 12 strings, which are mainly tuned in standard guitar fashion. Unlike the Chapman Stick, where the order of the "low" strings is high-to-low and the order of the "high" strings is low-to-high, the Box Guitars are immediately playable by almost any guitar player, having two sets of the same tuning. This may of course be varied to taste by the player, as the tuning of any stringed instrument would.

Stu has experimented widely with construction woods, and has come to advise Kauri Pine as his proffered choice for the body and neck. It is light of weight & possesses a guitar-tone-friendly, whilst being very strong and importantly, very stable.

His preferred fingerboard woods are African Walnut or Australian Blackwood. The grade of all woods on all the examples I saw was well chosen, and as I expected, the finishes were obviously painstakingly done. Stu is one meticulous bloke.

The bridge and tuning system is a brilliant piece of engineering, and as this is no ordinary guitar, needed to be made from scratch by Stu. A Floyd Rose type assembly keeps the strings firmly in tune at the nut end.

The tone of all the instruments was very even and accurate. I would



SPECS

- 24 frets/ 12 strings
- Kauri pine body and neck
- African walnut or Australian blackwood fingerboards
- x4 single coil pickups per guitar

guess that further processing, either by way of MIDI or other FX, would yield good results.

Box offers two price points for the guitars. Both are superbly constructed. The "A" series instruments have the better pickups and what Stu calls his "teardrop" back-of-the-neck profile, which is optimised for playing comfort (and more time-consuming to fashion). The "B" series instruments have cheaper pickups and a flatter back-of-neck profile.

Though all the instruments I saw included four single coil pickups (one pair per set of 6 strings) Stu will fit pickups and adjust woods as per customer requirements.

In my opinion, the single coils are the best option, as humbuckers may create too "blurry" a tone when using a whole bunch of fingers to play a whole bunch of notes!

Selection of pickups and top/bottom strings sets through toggle switches is a breeze, as is mono/stereo compatibility.

Though initially it appears that these guitars would be sort after by the tapping brigade, one can see that there are many slide and alternate tuning doors waiting to be opened....

As stated earlier, though I am not an exponent of tapping, I found all of these guitars very comfortable to play. There is no questioning the quality here. Way to go, Stu!

THECK 1.2

PRODUCT: CASIO PRIVIA PX310 KEYBOARD

REVIEWER: GORDON RYDER

DISTRIBUTOR: SHIRO 02 9415 5024



Over the past year or so I've noticed something new in the live music scene in Melbourne: Casio keyboards. Although no newcomer to the music industry (Casio's first keyboard came out in 1980) Casio keyboards have generally been the domain of the home user. The Privia series was released around 2004 with the aim of being suitable for the studio and live environment. There are currently five models in the Privia range with the PX310 being the focus of this review.

At a Glance

The PX310 is incredibly light at 11.5kg's especially given its full piano-length and weighted-key specification. Something to consider for those planning on touring or travelling with their keyboard; most domestic flights only allow for 20kg's of checked baggage (before excess charges apply) so having a light instrument is an advantage. In spite of its small and light framework the PX310 still packs in stereo speakers, over 200 sounds, recording and General MIDI. Too good to be true perhaps? Apparently not as I discovered while exploring this keyboard.

SPECS

- 88 keys with hammer action
- 32 note polyphony
- Touch sensitive
- Weight 11.5 kg
- RRP \$1499.95 (at time of printing)
- Optional stand (CS65P) and fix 3 pedal unit (SP30) are available. These accessories will make PX310 AMEB approved for examination purposes.

THE PX310 COVERS A LOT OF GROUND FOR A KEYBOARD WITH SUCH A SIMPLE TOP PANEL

This is a Journey into Sound

The Privia PX310's main piano sound is a stereo sample, the result of sampling a Steinway grand. It is a crisp and clear sounding sample with a touch of natural resonance and certainly worthy of use in the performance realm. It's worth mentioning that Casio have improved on the previous model Privia PX300 and use a totally new sound chip which amongst other things incorporates 'Tri-Element-Waveform' performance for piano sounds. This means that one of three separate samples will be triggered depending on how hard the key is pressed adding to realism and expression. There's a full complement of electric-pianos, organs, string-sounds and a General Midi sound set to be had also, along with the ability to split/layer sounds as has become standard on many but not all digital pianos.

The keyboard action is designed to replicate that of a grand-piano and is scaled so as to be heavier in the lower octaves. The feel is impressive, although perhaps a little heavier than is standard for a digital piano. This is fine for piano-style playing but may feel heavy when using organ/electric piano sounds and the like.

Compose and Record

Integrated recording is a bonus in anyone's book and the PX310 offers a 2-track recorder which is enough to workshop ideas, or critique your own playing; internal memory provides for 10 songs which are retained

after switch-off. I even made a short recording in which I changed sounds every couple of bars and the PX310 retained all sound changes on playback. You can also record with built-in accompaniment patterns and the PX310 will store this information also... did I mention accompaniment? Well it wouldn't be a Casio without that! Admittedly I've never owned a keyboard with accompaniment but the PX310 gave me some idea of what I'm missing out on. There's a very decent range of styles available although Casio have relegated this feature to just a few buttons on the front panel.

The PX310 covers a lot of ground for a keyboard with such a simple top panel. If there was one thing I could add to the Privia it would be a loop/repeat feature in Song-Mode. It seems an obvious idea for something such as soloing over a chord progression; you record the progression in and then hit the loop/repeat button to practice away. There is relatively little in the way of hands-on control with the PX310 and the addition of a couple of sliders to adjust layer-levels or accompaniment-level would also be an advantage; this feature is included but requires a 2-button press to accomplish. I can only guess that this was a decision on Casio's part to keep the user interface very minimal in appearance.

Conclusion

I would not categorise the PX310 as purely a performance keyboard: having stereo speakers and recording/accompaniment features would suggest it to be useful as a home keyboard also. But it does represent a significant effort by Casio to create an instrument that performing musicians will be comfortable with. Casio products have shown up in the arsenal of some big-name performers in the past (Moby is one example) and it will be interesting to see what sort of following builds from the Privia series. Casio have created a highly attractive product at a very realistic price.



All your guitar heroes are in this box

Well, all your favourite guitar heroes' sounds are in there anyway. You'll be impressed that your favourite **British sound** is built in, and amazed that you can dial up a collection of **vintage amplifier simulations** that will cause a sonic earthquake in any situation. You'll find so many famous **stomp box simulations** are included, that you won't need to bring anything but your guitar to create an unforgettable experience in the studio or on stage. You can even leave your acoustic under the bed, as the G1 contains an **acoustic guitar simulator** as well. And the **auto-chromatic tuner** will mean you'll always be in pitch. The **optional drum machine** will give you the perfect jam along companion, for rock, blues, ballads, metal or even jazz, always ready to play at any tempo you can tap in. Adding an optional expression pedal enables you to recreate that famous foot controlled wah wah, and you'll be astounded that the **4 types of pitch shift** effects let you dive bomb and growl like you'd only dream of in the 60s. The harmony pitch shifter can play a stunning harmony accompaniment with your solos too. Add the battery or ac power supply capabilities, the ability to plug in headphones for **private practice**, and the fact that the G1 **fits into a guitar case**, and we think all your guitar heroes would have been ecstatic. We reckon if they would have been impressed by the new ZOOM G1, so will you. Check one out today at your favourite music store.

ZOOM

www.zoom.co.jp

www.dynamictimusic.com.au

THECK 1.2

PRODUCT: ASHTON AWM200 WIRELESS SYSTEM

REVIEWER: JAMES MANSON **DISTRIBUTOR:** ASHTON 02 9698 4444

Ashton have added to the ever increasing collection of affordable wireless microphone - instrument systems with the AWM200, a true diversity, sixteen channel selectable wireless system. The Ashton AWM 200 arrived in an attractive aluminium style briefcase with all components safely nestled inside a padded interior. In the past I have found many instrument manufacturers are presenting products in packaging that has long term usability and Ashton get a thumbs up for the briefcase style storage solution; sure beats a flimsy cardboard box and plastic wrap. The AWM200 is available in two versions, the AWM200HT that includes a receiver, wireless microphone, audio cable, power adapter and 9V battery and the AWM200BP that ships with a receiver, body pack transmitter, lapel microphone, headset, guitar lead, audio cable, power adapter and 2 x AA battery. This is a minor point, but Ashton get another thumbs up for including something as basic as batteries in the package; it is always a pain to set up a piece of gear and then realise a trip in the rain to the nearest 7 eleven is in order to pick up a 9V battery.

The system provided for the review is the AWM200BP which includes the headset and lapel microphone and is the system to go for if you are a guitarist or bass player. The system is Australian designed and upon setting up I was pleased by the obvious quality of design and construction. The receiver and body pack are both fitted out with LCD displays that are straight forward and easily deciphered. Setting up is as simple as attaching both antenna, connecting the receiver to a mixer/channel strip via either the rear balanced XLR output or unbalanced High Z jack output, connecting either guitar or microphones to body pack, dialling in a corresponding channel between the body pack and receiver and cranking up the volume. There really is no need for fear or trepidation if you are reluctant about setting up a wireless system or have no experience in audio, we had the AWM200 fully functional in two minutes flat.

Once a full scan of the instruction manual was finished I started off by selecting the instrument setting on the 3 way gain switch on the body pack. The switch allows the user to input various level audio signals. There are three settings [Mic/Inst/Line] with the mic setting being the weakest audio signal, and has the highest gain applied to the input signal and line is for stronger signals with less gain required. The guitar signal was loud and clear through the monitors with no obvious loss of gain or tonality. Wireless systems in the past have been notorious for affecting the tone of a guitar signal and adding or subtracting accordingly undesired or desired frequencies. I found the output level dial on the front of the AWM200 very useful and insures there are no

BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS ... HOW DOES IT SOUND? ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT!

nasty blasts of sound or feedback when first setting up and really helps in adjusting the receiver level to match the input level requirements of the final output source. I was initially struck by how quiet the signal appeared to be and the absolute and total lack of interference. I checked the system with both hum-buckers and serial interference offenders, single coil pickups, and the AWM200 performed admirably with both. From an instrument slant, the AWM200 is a winner and comes highly recommended.

Next up was the headset and firstly I have to complain about the tight fit. I have been told I have an unusually large head but I found the headset to be somewhat uncomfortable. But the most important question, of course, is ... How does it sound? Absolutely brilliant! The signal was again clear and we achieved optimum gain structure with a minimum of fuss. I had to try pretty hard to induce feedback to the point of sticking my head as close to a monitor as possible, not recommended. The headset could be used by a range of performers from public speaking, vocal and dance to your friendly local evangelist.



SPECS

- **AWM200HT:** Includes receiver, wireless mic, audio cable, power adapter and 9v battery
- **AWM200BP:** Includes receiver, body pack transmitter, lapel mic, headset, guitar lead, audio cable, power adapter and 2x AA battery

The headset mic performed well in a band situation and with the correct setting can be used on stage in this context reliably. The tonality of the mic was broad and had no obvious frequency deficiencies. When speaking into the mic a signal level is shown on the receiver LCD display. The AWM200 has a squelch dial on the back but I found I really did not need to utilise this feature. The squelch feature operates as a subtle compressor/limiter.

We all need a lapel mic and this is what I had the pleasure of testing next. Again the mic sounded good with pleasant lower frequencies present and optimum sound was fairly effortless to achieve. I again had to try hard to make the mic feedback so I don't see this being a problem in standard situations. The mic is unobtrusive and very well constructed. The mic's lead is built to last and the connectors long a source of frustration in these units are sturdy and strong. I don't see long term problems there.

Anyone who desires a reliable wireless system for vocals in a variety of situations or for guitar/bass set-ups can't really do better than the AWM200BP. Solid construction, well thought out front panel layouts, easy to access and use channel, mode and power buttons and a good professional sound. The actual metre range is quoted as 100 line of sight and although I did not test this for myself I had no problems with roaming over an expansive area and in between rooms and walls. The AWM200BP is a quality package with a quality sound, Well done Ashton.

CHECK 1,2

PRODUCT: GUVNOR GA-750CE **REVIEWER:** MARCEL YAMMOUNI

DISTRIBUTOR: CMC MUSIC 02 9905 2511

I had only just placed a phone order of Beef Szechuan and Fried Rice at Ying's Noodles in Diamond Creek, when the call came through that a Guvnor would be dropping into my house. I didn't panic, Beef Szechuan is a meal fit for royalty and there was plenty to go around. However, I was relieved to find out that I didn't have to share my meal after all, as the Guvnor was in fact the GA-750CE Acoustic guitar cutaway with a pickup.

Guvnor is a relatively new brand when it comes to guitars, predominantly known for their budget range of acoustics. In an ever-competing world of acoustic guitars sub a thousand dollars one question I had to ask is "does the world need another one?" Maybe not, but new companies keep coming up offering more features than ever before, as is the case with the GA-750 CE.

The 750 CE boasts many features that are comparable to a guitar far more expensive in price. It's a dreadnought style guitar with AAA solid spruce top, Solid Flamed maple back and sides, a Sapele neck with a gloss finish and rosewood fingerboard. The neck feel is quite chunky compared to some other acoustics I've played. I didn't mind this at all. There are a lot of guitar players out there who are fond of the big neck on guitars. It gives a nice solid feel. My test was playing the F bar chord, which I did with ease. The balance of the instrument seemed to be a little off centre with the neck feeling closer to the body. This may be a good thing for those smaller in stature who usually wouldn't choose a Dreadnought as their guitar and struggle with the reach. If you fall into this category, this could be the guitar for you.

It's the little aesthetically pleasing features that really separate this guitar like the mother of pearl fingerboard inlays, gold Grover styled machine heads, abalone rosette and the rosewood binding. All this makes for a guitar that once again should be more expensive than what it is. The bridge was very interesting with an asymmetric pull through style system. To put it in even simpler terms "she's a nice looking guitar Guvnor"

Though it is a dreadnought guitar in appearance, it has a slightly choked small body sound. This may have to do with the fact that the strings on it were a bit dead seeing as they may have come all the way from Asia by sea over a period of several months. It also had an action you could ski under which made it a little difficult to play. I guess everyone's going to have their own preference in regards to set up. I personally like my action kind of low.

Playing finger style seemed to be where this guitar showed it's better sound. It was voiced in a way that was midrange heavy. Strumming chords sounded a little thin, there wasn't a great deal of volume coming out of the guitar.

NOT MENTION THE FACT THAT IT'S A NICE LOOKING GUITAR THAT HAS MORE FEATURES THAN MOST GUITARS IN IT'S PRICE RANGE.

The Pick up is an EQ 4 system with bass, mid, treble and presence. It was a little bit on the pingy piezo side of things and did require some manoeuvring to come up with the sound that I wanted. Once I got it to a place where I was happy it seemed to work just fine. Bare in mind I'm getting a fair bit fussier in my old age when it comes to plug in acoustic guitars. There are only a handful of acoustic guitars out there that don't have that harsh piezo sound. So it's a little unfair to try and compare the Guvnor considering the price range and the market it's aimed at.

So who is this guitar aimed at? It's price range would suggest that it's aimed at the beginner to intermediate player. The build quality of the GA-750CE is actually quite good and very neatly done. I would classify the GA-750CE as a student model guitar, but for a student who wants



SPECS

- AAA Solid spruce top
- Solid flamed maple back and sides
- Sapele neck
- Rosewood fingerboard
- Mother of pearl fingerboard inlays
- Gold grover style machine heads
- Abalone rosette
- EQ4 system pickup with bass, mid, treble and presence

something a little bit more than an entry level guitar. Not mention the fact that it's a nice looking guitar that has more features than most guitars in it's price range. Sure, there are better guitars out there, but it's worth having a look at the GA-750CE. Even if it's to just satisfy your curiosity.

Guvnor is certainly a company that stands behind their guitars offering a 5 year Guarantee which is in the form of a credit card with a pin number that you can register the product online. Check out <http://www.guvnor.com/GuvnorWeb/> They have competition giveaways, blogs and other various stories. It's worth a look.



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CHECK 1,2

PRODUCT: MOTION SOUND KBR-M **REVIEWER:** STEWART YULE

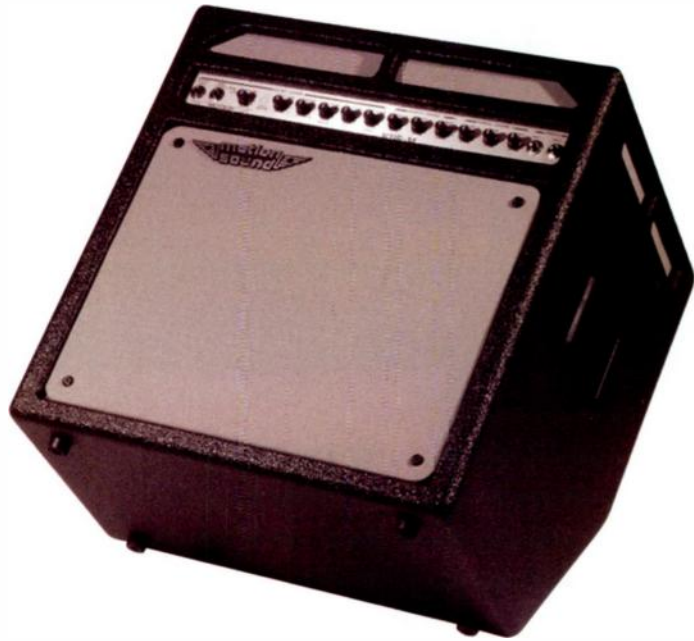
DISTRIBUTOR: PRO AUDIO SUPPLIES 02 6249 7766

How many times have we as keyboard players wanted just one piece of equipment to cover all our needs as a player and vocal monitor in one easy to carry package. Up until now we have had to sacrifice either our keyboard sound or vocal sound, but not any more, Motion Sound have just released their "all in one" amplifier called the KBR-M

Motion Sound are a small American company building a complete range of hand made keyboard and organ amplifiers. Based in Salt Lake City, UTAH, John Fisher saw the need for lightweight portable rotary amps for stage organs and high quality stereo and hi-fi keyboard amps.

Having played a Motion Sound full rotary speaker with my drawbar organ previously I was intrigued to see how their "hybrid" amp would sound where they use a real rotary horn for high frequency and simulate the bass rotor.

Unpacking the KBR-M I was surprised at the weight, it felt a lot lighter than I was expecting and I was impressed with the tough finish, something they call Polymaric, it certainly would be near impossible to scratch this unit. On inspection of the front panel there are two different areas of which one is for the rotary channel and the other is divided into normal channel and monitor channel, each with it's own volume and tone controls. I was really keen to hear the rotary sound so I grabbed my drawbar organ plugged it into the rotary channel, adjusted the volume to about 5 and hit a nice deep power chord trying to emulate that distorted John Lord sound. It sounded good but not quite there so I decided to play a little with the 12AX7 valve pre and post controls, turning the pre up to about 2 o'clock seemed to bring the valve to life and the distortion was there, just like my old 122. Now how good was the rotary and even more important did they sacrifice the sound by not having a bass rotor. The problem with most simulators, especially ones that simulate the high frequencies, are that they sound good in the slow mode but don't cut it when switched to fast. Motion Sound have eliminated this by keeping the top rotor a real rotary horn and they simulate the bass. This seems to work well on this unit, even though I felt it lacked a little depth if worked flawlessly when I took it to play a live gig with.



SPECS

- Channels: Rotary, Normal, Monitor
 - Power Amp: 140 watts
 - Valve: 12AX7
 - Speakers: 12" Eminence, 3.5" HF Horn
 - Rotary MS1.2 Driver
 - Footswitch: Fast, Slow, Stop
 - Finish: Tough Polymaric
 - Dimensions: H546mm W495mm D431mm
 - Weight: 27.2kg
- APPLICATION: Keyboards, Organ, Vocal Monitor

THE CLARITY IS ASTOUNDING, GREAT FOR PIANO AND EVEN BETTER FOR STRINGS, ELECTRIC PIANO AND SOME LEAD SYNTH SOLOS

I think the biggest surprise I got was when I played my piano and synth through the Normal section, I don't think I have heard a better on stage sound than what I got with this amp. The clarity is astounding, great for piano and even better for strings, electric piano and some lead synth solos. I can't wait to try out their stereo amps as I have been hearing good things about them on the grapevine. Once again the tone controls were just right for keyboards, a very sweet early Greg Mackie style of sound, plenty of tone control here.

What intrigued me more than anything is that Motion Sound tout this as an on stage vocal monitor or FOH monitor as well. How this works is that you can get a feed from your FOH mix, or just your own vocals and feed this back into the amp. There is a switch on the back to stop

this signal from re-entering the signal path if you are sending a feed of your keyboards to FOH. How cool is that!

To me Motion Sound have done their research well, this has to be the most complete small package of joy any gigging keyboard player could want. At a retail price of \$2495 this has to be good value as you get three amps in one. This one didn't go back!

CHECK 1,2

PRODUCT: GREG BENNETT DESIGN SERIES 18 ASDM DREADNOUGHT ACOUSTIC

REVIEWER: DOM ITALIANO **DISTRIBUTOR:** AMS sales@austmusic.com.au

Writing my first official guitar review was always going to be a fun challenge, and when I began to play the Greg Bennet Designed Samick Series 18 ASDM Dreadnought Acoustic, I knew I was having a good day.

Firstly, let me confess that I suffer from guitar snobbery. When I was younger, Samick was considered the budget guitar brand. They absolutely had the 'affordable' guitar market cornered, but that was all they had in my eyes... Until today!

The ASDM is the lower priced model in the Series 18 range. There are 4 models in total, and all of them are solid top guitars, with this particular guitar sporting a Sitka Spruce top and solid striped Mahogany 2 piece back and sides. The solid construction of the guitar is apparent just by picking it up. It's not heavy, but substantial, and feels like you're holding a fair piece of tree.

Let's cover the important thing first... Does it look good? Yep, really good! The solid top looks gorgeous and the mahogany sides make you wish you could afford a dining table made out of the same stuff. There is no cutaway, but who needs one, right? The abalone soundhole ring, is a sweet touch, suggesting that the guitar has been made with attention to detail, and the headstock is very cool indeed. Interestingly, the headstock doesn't read 'Samick', just 'S' and Greg Bennett Designed. It's the kind of guitar that any discerning player would feel fine about being seen out and about with... Anyone that thinks that looks don't matter in a guitar.... Obviously doesn't play guitar!

Now the really important things: How does it sound and play?

Tonally, the guitar covers all bases more than adequately. In fact, it's really well balanced, with the highs and mids still cutting thru despite the fact that it's got a really tight and crisp bottom end. It projects well and is of medium volume. I threw a Shure Beta 87C mic in front of it and ran it into my AER Compact Mobile. With a little EQ I got a very 'rich' sound, which makes me eager to try out the next model up that has a pick-up and cutaway (I know, who needs one... but they are fun!).

Having said all that about the sound, the guitar doesn't have a lot of its own character yet. It's still young and maybe with some battle scars, a few smoky pub gigs and some time in someone's greasy hands, it'll come to life, like so many other acoustic guitars tend to.

This guitar plays very well, considering it's straight out of the box. I had to stretch the strings a lot, but then it stayed in tune, no worries. The machine heads are Grover heads and were as responsive as they were shiny! The Rosewood Fingerboard was good and flat and the action was brilliant, with hardly any buzz, and even then I had to strum pretty hard to get any nasty noises.

Using a pick on this baby really did add some charm and enjoyment to playing it, which is odd to me, as I'm much more of a finger picker on my own acoustics. Just goes to show that a decent axe can shape the way you play in a positive way. Stayed in tune when I threw a capo on, which further reinforced that Samick's Indonesian factory really are succeeding in their efforts to build great quality, affordable guitars.

My only issues with this guitar on the playing side are that I think that the neck, although very easy to hold could be a little thicker. It's just my preference to have a chunky logwith jumbo frets in my hands.

My own issues with the neck and frets lead me to one main conclusion. This guitar is designed either for beginners (and folks that like their acoustics' to feel like their electric) or kids with small-ish, not-so-strong hands. This is exactly the type of guitar that someone should get as their first instrument. I would have practiced soooooo much more if my first guitar sounded this good and stayed in tune! (Parents Note: Buy your kids good quality instruments!! The kids are more likely to keep at it if it's a pleasure to play and, at least you'll make some money back on a good quality guitar if the kid quits!)

This is also the perfect guitar for someone who mainly plays electric guitar, but wants to give their acoustic playing a little more attention.



SPECS

- Solid Sitka Spruce top
- Solid striped mahogany 2 piece back and sides
- Abalone soundhole
- Grover machine heads
- Rosewood fingerboard

I'm sure that if you put some kind of pick-up in it, this instrument would be a super solid gigging guitar, especially if you play in Cover Band Land and only need an acoustic for a few songs a night, and don't want your \$5000 Taylor in a smoky Irish Pub at 3am.

At \$595 RRP this is a great buy, and it gives some of the \$800-\$1000 name brands a real run for their money. I'm happy to report, I have shed my snobby preconceptions of Samick guitars, and would actually quite seriously consider buying one myself!

If you do end up with one of these guitars, make sure you get a sturdy Hard Case, coz this guitar is a keeper, and you'll want to make sure that nothing untoward happens to it.

CHECK 1,2

PRODUCT: DIGITECH 'BRIAN MAY' ARTIST SERIES 'RED-SPECIAL' PEDAL

REVIEWER: CRAIG MCDONALD **DISTRIBUTOR:** CMI 03 9315 2244

This edition I am reviewing the Digitech Brian May artist series 'Red-Special' pedal. I have always been a huge fan of Queen, and I don't think there would be a guitarist out there who has not heard some of Queen's classic songs and at some stage, tried to emulate Brian May's unique tone. Well look no further, Digitech has come up with the goods, and to quote directly from Brian May, "This piece of gear is, in my opinion, a work of genius! An amazing Digitech team have created a device capable of making anyone sound like me." Fantastic!

The 'Red-Special' looks very much like most of the Digitech pedal range, although the red wood-grain finish does make it look more custom than others. About the same size as a standard wah pedal, and made of metal, these boxes are built tough. I have yet to see one get damaged or have any construction problems – (which is great for live work). Digitech have certainly got this part well and truly worked out. At first glance, this pedal looks extremely easy to operate, with well marked and user-friendly controls. Plugging in is simple, with the option of running out mono into a normal guitar amp, or by using the 'flexible-output-mode', running in stereo direct into a mixer or stereo recording device. It does state in the setup directions that to best utilise the built-in 'treble-booster' and the other onboard effects, you should plug your guitar directly into the 'Red-Special' instead of placing it at the end of the effects chain.

Controls on the top are tip and ring controls, together are 'gain' and 'level', 'treble' and 'bass', 'control' and 'guitar' ... 'model' selection on it's own. The first two control knobs are self explanatory but the actual 'control' knob is pretty special. The 'control' is an adjustment that works with each individual model selected. It can increase or decrease the midrange, adjust phaser speed, adjust reverb level, increase or decrease delay times and even adjust pitch blend! The 'guitar' control, which is the ring section on the 'control' knob is used to transform your tone to sound more like Brian May's guitar using the modelling technology. It has three main positions, "SC" (for single-coil guitars), "Red-Special" (if you are actually playing a 'Red-Special' guitar) and "HB" (for humbucker equipped guitars). As always with most Digitech pedals, there is always much more inside than meets the eye. This pedal contains a huge variety of tones all factory pre-set and ready to go so let's go check them out.

INSTANTLY YOU CAN HEAR THE BRIAN MAY TONE, RIGHT DOWN TO THE TREBLE-BOOSTER AND THE ORCHESTRAL HARMONIZER THAT PRODUCES A HUGE THREE-PART-HARMONY

As per my introduction, this pedal is totally based on the tones and mix of effects that the legendary Brian May from Queen has used for many years. There are seven different models to choose from which are pre-set to the exact tones that were used for the corresponding songs they have been named after. I basically went through all the settings just to hear how they sounded without any alteration by myself and instantly you can hear the Brian May tone, right down to the treble-booster and the orchestral harmonizer that produces a huge three-part-harmony with extremely fast tracking and no signal lag even in the fastest leggato passages – amazing! With even more different tones and adjustments available if you set the pedal toe down or heel down, this pedal is really packed full of awesome sounds. I was really quite surprised to find so much in it. Some of the tones will be perfect for certain guitarists, some may not like them, personal choice I guess,



SPECS

- Seven selectable 'Artist-Preset' effects models
- Integral hard-wired dynamic analogue 'treble-booster'
- Flexible output mode
- Vintage wood-grain finish, unique to each pedal
- Optional FS3X footswitch available

but if you are buying this pedal, it is for one reason only, to sound like Brian May.

Of course I played around with my own settings for a while and came up with some different sounds as well, but if you don't feel like spending time doing this, work straight out of the book, dial up the suggested factory Brian May settings, and you will definitely hear the best tones available from this unit. To further expand on the useability of the 'Red-Special', you can add the optional DigiTech foot-switch FS3X, (not supplied), which plugs in to the side of the unit. The FS3X provides increased functionality and convenient hands-free control over up and down selection of models and activation of the models you choose. As with all DigiTech equipment, you should fully read the manual to get the most out of the pedal, it can do so much more than you think.

So if you are into the music of 'Queen' and have been chasing Brian May's tone, this pedal will do the job nicely. I suggest you go out to your local music shop and have a play with one, you will be impressed. Overall, the Brian May 'Red-Special' pedal is a great unit for playing live or in the studio and offers great value for money retailing at \$599.00 (including the power supply) – Go check one out now!

CASIO



PX700 

11
Tones

The new PX700 (featured above) comes with an integrated stand and 3 pedal unit.

EXPERIENCE THE NEW Privia

Zpi SOUND SOURCE

- NEW Stereo-sampled tri-element ZPI Sound Source
- With natural key touch, the new Privia brings more polished full concert grand piano sound.
- Rich piano playability for professionals.
- Scaled hammer action keyboard for authentic grand piano feel.
- Compact and light weight.

OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES FOR PX110 & PX310:



- Stand (CS65P)
- 3 pedal unit (SP30) - for use only with CS65P stand.

Approved by the AMEB

PX110 

11
Tones

The NEW basic Privia



Comes with Stand, (CS65P).

PX310 

202
Tones

The NEW multi-function model
for stage performances



(CS65P Stand is an optional accessory).

View the NEW Privia models at your Music Dealer or contact Casio on (02) 9415 5024. www.casio.com.au

World Radio History

AUSTRALIAN MUSIC ASSOCIATION

The listed stores are your guide to quality musical product, great advice, and genuinely helpful service. You have seen the latest gear in the pages of this edition... now go and check it all out for yourself!

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CMC Music www.cmcmusic.com.au	32
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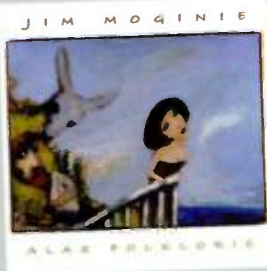
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